Illuminarc

CHASING THE ARC OF INNER LIGHT

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WALKING STICK PUBLICATION

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"In the dark heart of melancholy resides
the prism for Buddha's light..."

Foreword

Newton, in the course of his investigations into the mysterious phenomenon of light, had once written :

> *"And if one look through a Prism upon a white Object encompassed with blackness or darkness, the reason of the Colors arising on the edges is much the same, as will appear to one that shall a little consider it."* [1]

Is that not the very ethos of science? To *"a little consider it"*? To ask just *some* probing questions, let in but a *few* interrogatives, display simply a *modicum* of curiosity which drives our sense of quest, of propelling search, of a compelling *want* to *know*? It is a human need which the great German mathematician, David Hilbert, had so eloquently put:

> *"Wir müssen wissen. Wir werden wissen."*
> ("We must know. We will know.")

And if we extend our Newtonian spectrum a little more, is that not how we appraise with our own reading glasses the society around us, our compatriots, and our own inner selves? We want to *know* ourselves. Of *who* we are and *why* we are what we are. We question ourselves constantly, even second-guess.

Our mental ruminations as well as the variegated stimuli of interactions we have with the social fabric around us are like luminous impulses of white and dark nature, like Newton's rings [2]. So when the great man further wrote,

---

[1] From *"Optiks, Book 1, Part 2"*, by Sir Isaac Newton. He was referring to the fact that the various colors in a spectrum combine to create white light, and in reverse, light from a white object is split into component colors by a prism.

[2] "Newton's rings" are an interference pattern created by the reflection of light between two reflecting surfaces set up in a specific manner. One can analyze such rings to derive information about the wavelength of the light, the micro-dimensions and shapes involved in the apparatus, etc. Is that not quite apropos of our own searching analyses?

"If a black Object be encompassed with a white one,
the Colors which appear through the Prism are to be
derived from the Light of the white one…",

may we not use it as an allusion to the human psyche, a roiling, complex mass of contradictions, enlightenment, dark thoughts, and illumined ideas which we are trying to make sense of with our imperfect personal prisms?

Man is a tool of passion, an earthen pot of water and spirit, a mixture of mud and rain raised above mere existence by his ability to introspect and communicate as fragrant petrichor. We are all clay and soil marinated in the verdicts of our emotions. In our ability to question ourselves, in our facility to subject ourselves to inquiring analysis. And in that very act, we notice – if we are mindful – of the rise of a very mysterious "me", a place of egotistical retreat, a seat of our righteousness, an emblem of all our insecurities, fears, exuberance, elation, expectations, perceptions, internalized failures, and so much more of the sylvan woods and the swampy marsh….

"Mind the abyss between man and humanity;
there sits the dark psyche of the untamed mind..."

And we, split apart from our "me", observe that psyche through our own colored lens, darkly; to conclude that our core may be what it may be, but its goodness must be measured by the virtuous whiteness of the conscience wrapping it, hiding a naked singularity, as it were:

for your conscience is the rough cloth
which covers the nudity of your mind…"

In turn, when this psyche witnesses the world around it, receiving as it does the filtered stimuli from our own senses and sense-interpretations, does it not get a collage of morphed images differing from reality? Of stylized "facts" and stereotyped representations of a complex reality, which, in turn, it uses to pronounce skewed judgments of itself and its social milieu?

"An inherent obfuscation
afflicts all difficult truths..."

As your inner eye might observe:

"Right beneath this shimmering...
beneath this glittering surface of water
lies
a distorted view of the world above..."

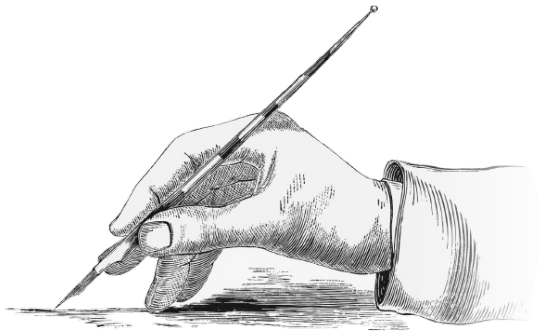
Consciously and subconsciously, we are creatures of similes and metaphors, of elaborate stories and thoughtlets of rhymes. We revel in spicy gossip as much as in lyrical poetry, pithy prose and sage proverbs. These are the clothes in which we drape our minds. They are part of the human prisms which split and display our dark colors. And just as for visible light, the spread of our naked inner thoughts is wider the denser the material of our prisms, our daily parables. The more intense the beam of luminosity shining inside us through these fables, the brighter the reflected spectrum of our hidden emotions.

We ask ourselves – if we were truthful to ourselves – questions which make us squirm or feel tickled. We understand ourselves through this Aristotelian catechism, for the solution hides in our own twilight… And sometimes, in moments of meditative abstraction, we feel a *Total Internal Reflection*. A circular rainbow heads back inside our own firmament, an inner vision looking inward. Our pentagon of senses acknowledges a sixth one, as the song of light steps echoes in our deep recesses. At such perceptual instances, one viscerally feels an innate whisper:

"From ashes to rose...
...Metamorphose..."

Let us find our own illuminarcs to rise above our inner selves.

Vijay Fafat
Singapore
20 October 2024



"The Confusion of Tongues", by Gustav Dore ("Goostaav Dawray", 1832-1883), a brilliant, prolific French artist of the mid-nineteenth century who excelled at many arts and left behind a legacy of thousands of illustrations and caricatures, most notably for Dante's "Divine Comedy" and "The Bible".

Of Snakes and Grease

Oh!
How the false prophets rule the heavens of men!
And how true their craft, their witchcraft oil sells!
Cursed are the scoundrels and their crooked paths,
flies not the lark straight in the arc of Holy Hell...

In the End

Nature! Nature! Malign Mistress!
Lies of Life burn in Death's distress…

Consummation

In the black widow's hemlock
does the swooning lover swim,
in passion's betrayed throes
does Nature's mercy dim…

Spake the Barberic Oracle

In the fire of Medusa stares
Time's purple grindstone,
Nature a pretty scalper,
reclaims fair hair on loan.

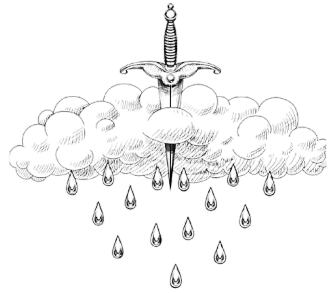
Medusa was one of the three monstrous sisters (called "Gorgons") in Greek mythology, with a look so hideous that anyone who looked at her directly turned to stone.

Blind Spot

In your pious sermons,
miss not the horns of God.

Scope-Creep

We shift the edges of what we need;
by 'a little more' does our jealous greed creep...

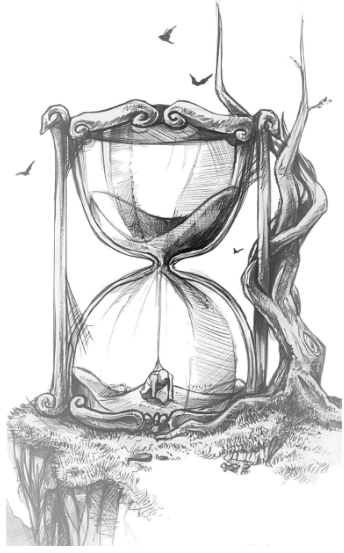


Make an Example

Raise your sword of peace for all to see;
a pity it would be to waste its drying blood…

The Cynic's Word

In Time's swirl falls
life's bon mot untaught;
from dawn to dusk,
from dust to naught;
from asses to ashes,
such is our lot,
we strive for completeness
of the irrelevant thought…

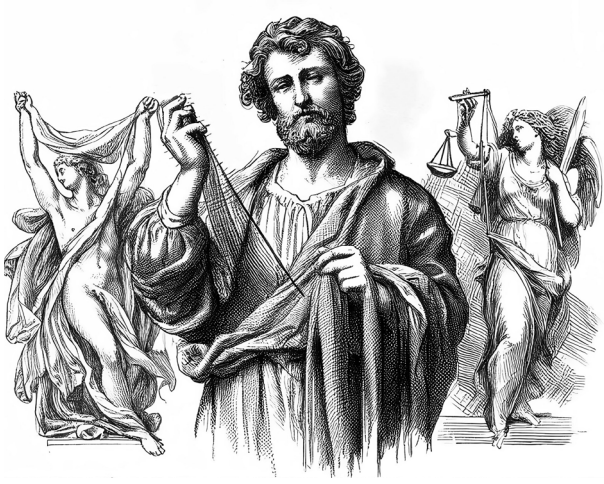


Recognition

We are all names
penciled in a forgotten book...
...waiting…
waiting to jump out of the pages...

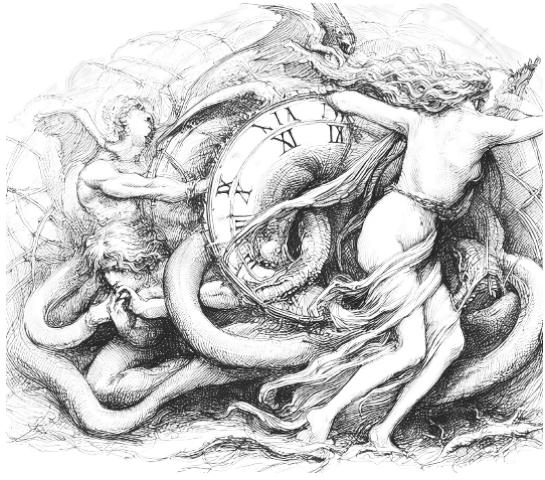
Grey Lights

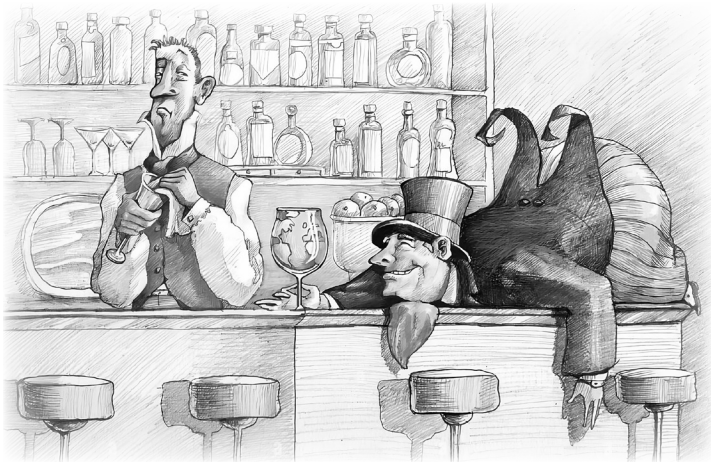
Truth comes in many garbs,
judge it not by fashion's gavel;
there are threads of fiction to weave,
there are fibers of piety to unravel.



Enmeshed

Time, unrepenting, rapacious in its moves,
its cruel snare a lure for trapped flies;
every mighty protest falling on ears flat,
shut as they are to mortal pleas and cries.





Toast Master

Thank you all for your wishes fine,
as I merrily age on the unwinding vine;
a toast to ye all of earned disrepute -
of joyful sins, of drunken flutes!

North by Northwest

Of what import, another's judgment?
It is our experience of life's immersion.

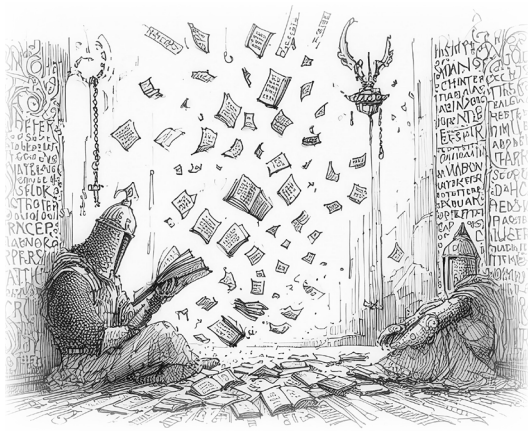
And yet…
and yet...
with every stare,
with every hurt,
the ship's compass heralds a different turn...

Observed

O! How the world stares
in a thousand ways of judgment!
O! How the hurricane hides
in that watching breeze untamed!

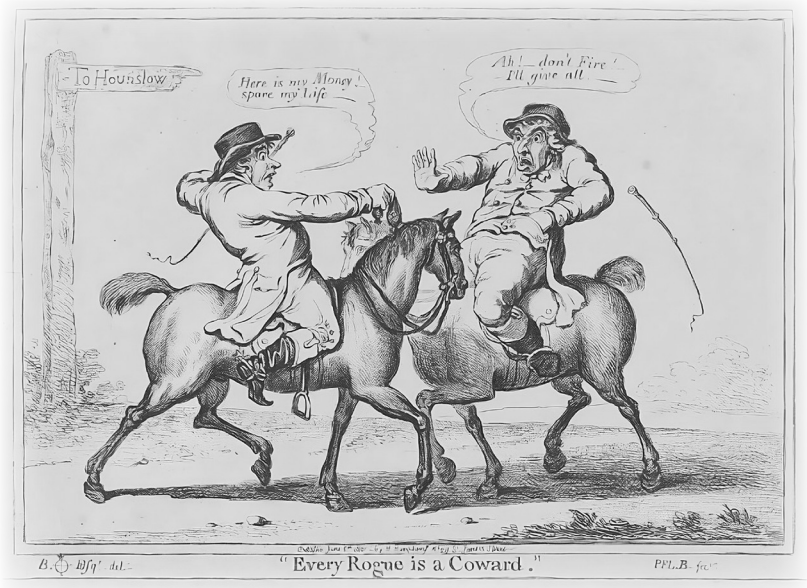
Pick Me Up...

Words dropped from that elegant book
stay uncollected on the floor,
as the barbarians have left unread
the gentle reader at the gate.



Aqua-escing

What flows in your veins
if not red blood?
And yet, why does it feel
it might be liquid cowardice?



James Gilray (1756-1815, England) was a brilliant caricaturist renowned for his biting satirical commentary through his art, having printed more than a thousand drawings. More information on this gifted artist can be found at www.james-gilray.com

Blasphemous

When Man threw down his spears
and bloodied the heavens with his fears:
did He smile at His work to see?
Did He who made the Lamb make thee??

- modified from William Blake, "The Tyger"

Original:

"When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the Lamb make thee?"

Soul Music

As it flows - your honeyed speech -
so it measures - love's fragrant musk,
but runs afar from empathy's reach,
feeble soul stained in empty husk...

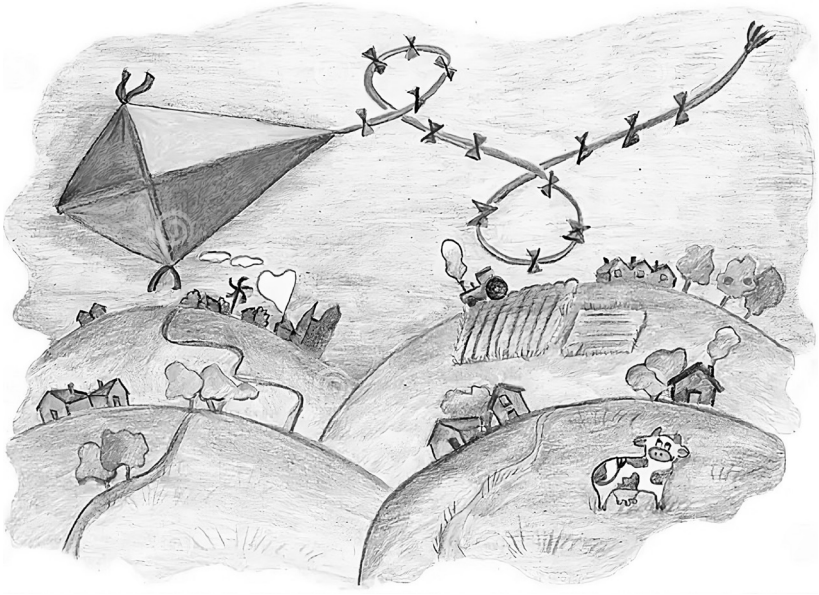
Sundering Sundries

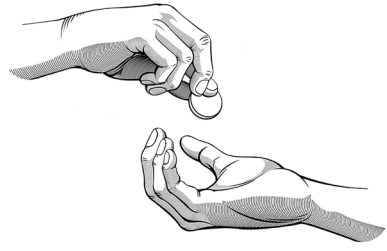
In good measure and often,
we engage in an argument
over the ninth pawn of white...

For the many metaphorical meanings associated with the "Ninth Pawn of White", see the foreword to the author's book of the same title.

Soar

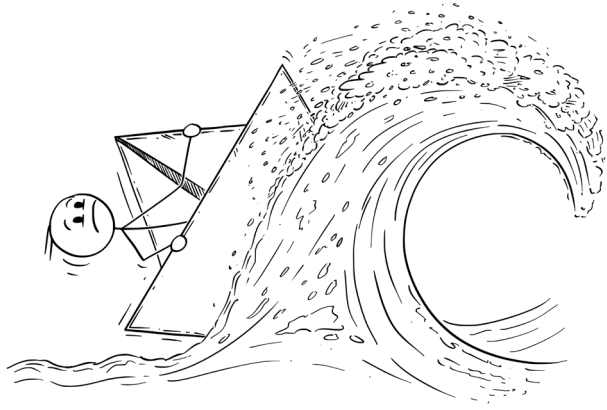
Dreams are not birds but kites
(not to pun),
flying on desire's taut strings
if only you have one…





Avarice

The pious monk does cry,
seeing men gilded in capriced gold,
a moment's tempt, an impulsed desire,
cheap the drowning of bartered soul.



Blushing Ways

Is it in man to offer a reddened chin,
in Virtuous sin and not Sinful hymn?

Fancy's Delight

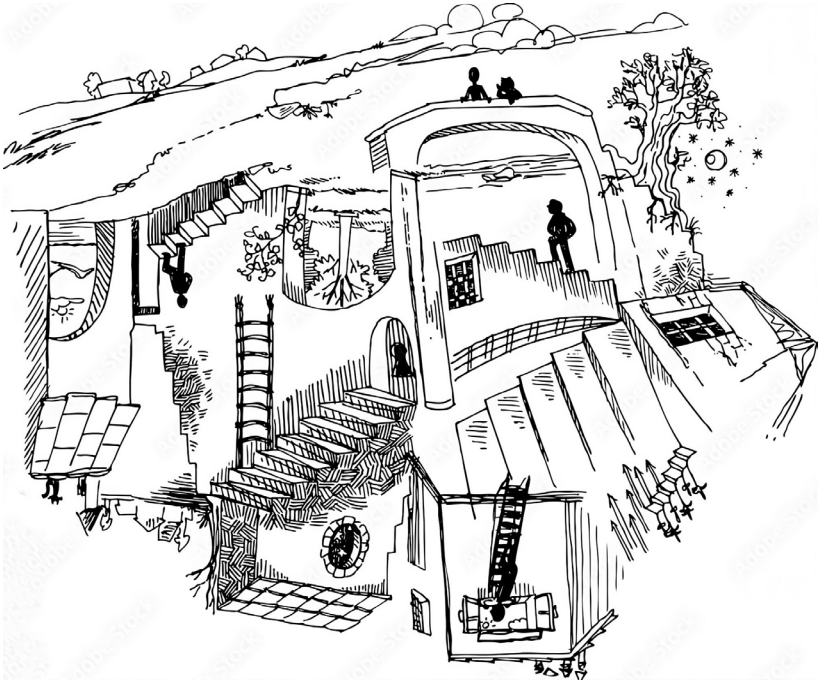
The mind surveys all the chaos,
and therein justifies the rose...

Slay It!

Oh, for want of but a wonted murder!
Where be the sharp thorn to twist vanity's vein!

Desert Clouds

The shadows of water do tease their parch,
never to rain but mock in onward march.



Descent

A sight what!
When falls a star of renown...
for the staircase of Virtue leads
both up and down…

Celebrate!

And when I die, let it be said,
"His bills were Large, but never Unpaid",
and when I am dead, I hope it may be sung,
"His virtues were colored, but his wine was drunk!"

Original by Hilaire Belloc:
"When I am dead, I hope it may be said:
His sins were scarlet, but his books were read."

Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953) was a multi-talented French-English satirist and politician, a former Member of Parliament in UK.

Meet Janus

Know this world is two-faced,
fraudulent, fake, obtuse;
with open face it heaps its praise,
with the hidden, its poisoned abuse.

In Roman mythology, Janus ("Jay-n-us"); was the god of war and peace, beginnings and endings, gateways, and other such dual-edged concepts. He is generally depicted with two faces looking in opposite directions, which is why a person who is insincere or speaks from both sides of his mouth is called "Janus-faced". The month of January is named after him.

Counter-Thought

"When you arise in the morning think of what a privilege it is to be alive …",
said Marcus Aurelius.

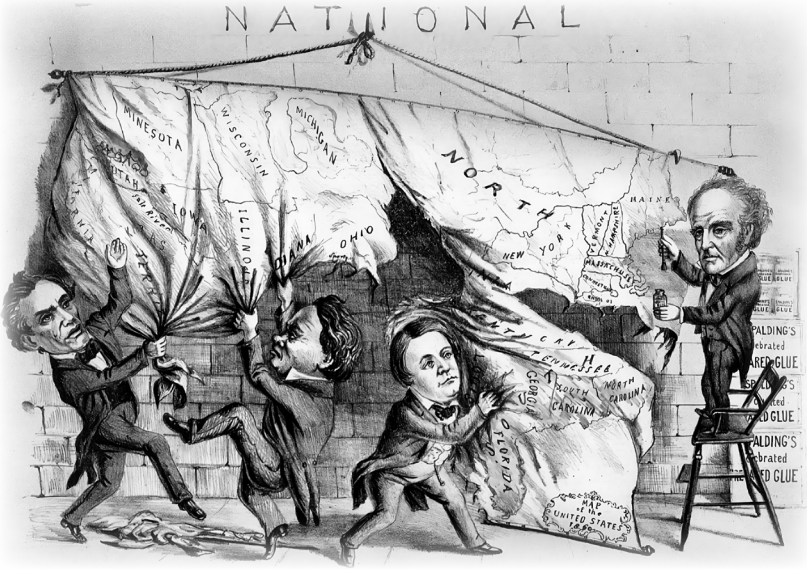
"On the other hand, when you wake up dead, it really sucks",
observed Deadalus Zombius.

The image was the cover of the tenth album called "Wake of the Flood", released by the famous rock band, "Grateful Dead" in 1973.

Marcus Aurelius (121 AD - 180 AD) was a Roman Emperor, the last of "The Five Good Emperors", and the author of the influential book, "Meditations - Things Unto Himself".

Negotiations

There is a right,
there is a wrong,
and there is a world with its demands.

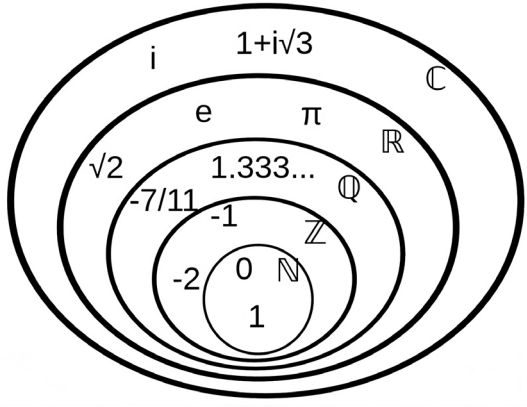


Cast the Stone

Judge the books you read.
They are witness to your personality.

Semantically Speaking

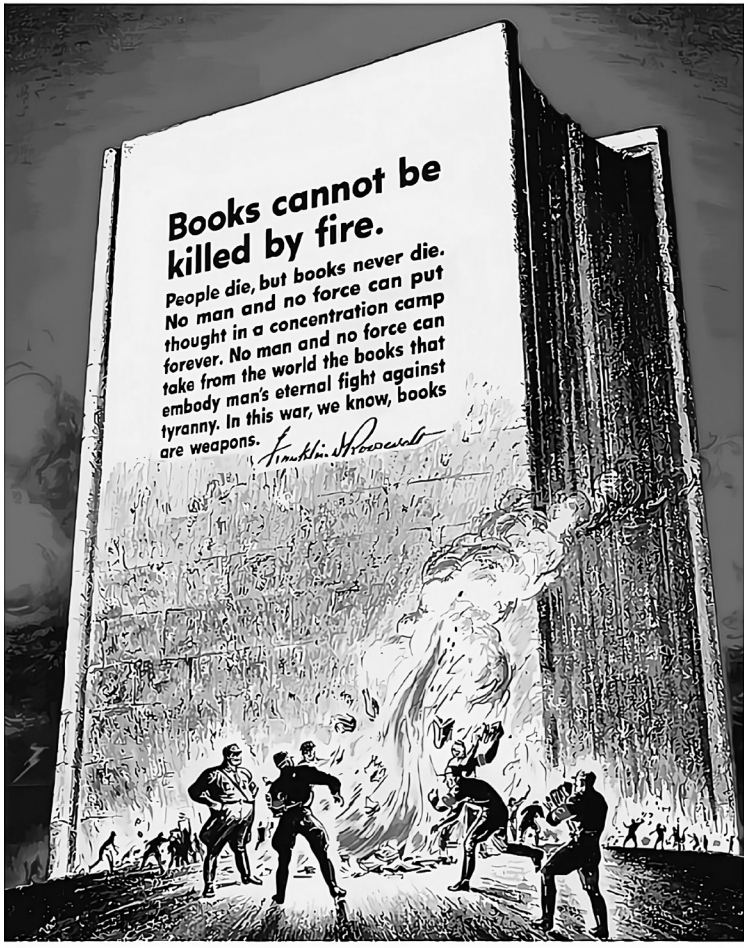
Even when a symbol writes itself,
has it understood its own truth?



The nested classification of complex numbers.

Karmic Circle

He who measures for others the casket
is quickest to hell in a sodden hand-basket.

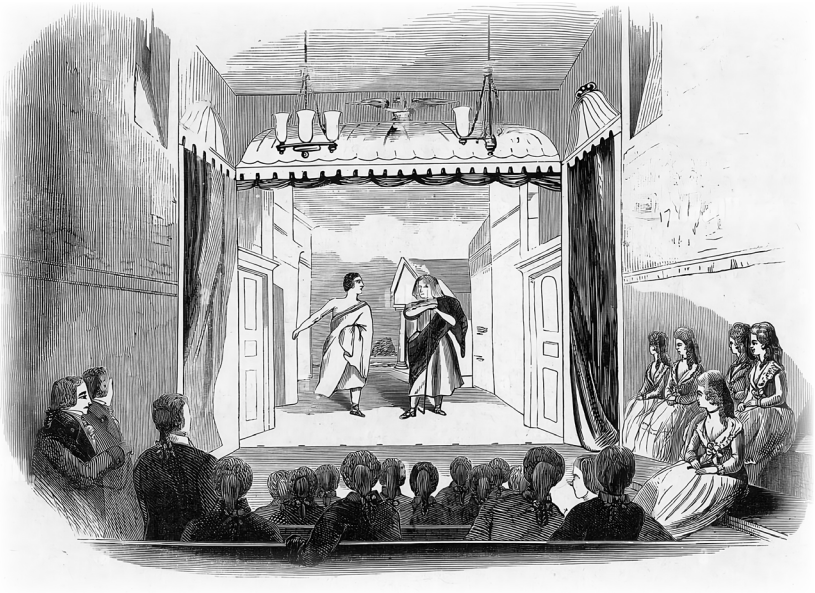

Books cannot be killed by fire.
People die, but books never die. No man and no force can put thought in a concentration camp forever. No man and no force can take from the world the books that embody man's eternal fight against tyranny. In this war, we know, books are weapons.
Franklin D. Roosevelt

BOOKS ARE WEAPONS IN THE WAR OF IDEAS

This poster was titled "Books are Weapons in the War of Ideas" and created by artist Steve Broder for the Office of War Information in 1942. It shows Nazis burning books, with a quotation by President Franklin Roosevelt, *"Books cannot be killed by fire. People die, but books never die. No man and no force can put thought in a concentration camp forever. No man and no force can take from the world the books that embody man's eternal fight against tyranny. In this war, we know, books are weapons."*

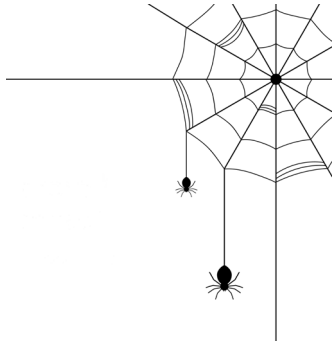
Instigators

I hope that someday
they find my books worth burning;
the unwritten words between lines
would then have made their last stand…



Thespianic

Leave the stage with elegance,
etching the memory with elan,
for the flourish of dramatic Exits
beats the pomp of Entries, dear man!



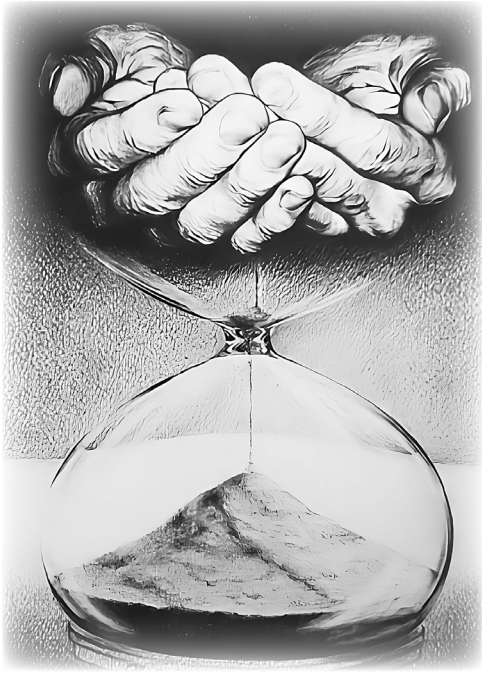
Spindle of Time

The world of illusion, this web of desire,
entraps the insect ignorant, alas!
Time, the Eternal Destroyer, He laughs,
razing future, present, and all of past...

An anonymous woodcut, likely from 1895, depicting Father Time with his scythe.

Unfurl!

Man is born with a soul bound in fist,
in closed palms knurled and curled;
greeting arms when he opens wide,
shares he a part of that soul with the world.



Lipstick...

It takes an artist or a crook
to feather a pig and fly it high.

Malpractice...

Men…
they execute contracts
written with uncontrolled quill and dark ink,
such as can stain the soul inside out.

Attempt It...

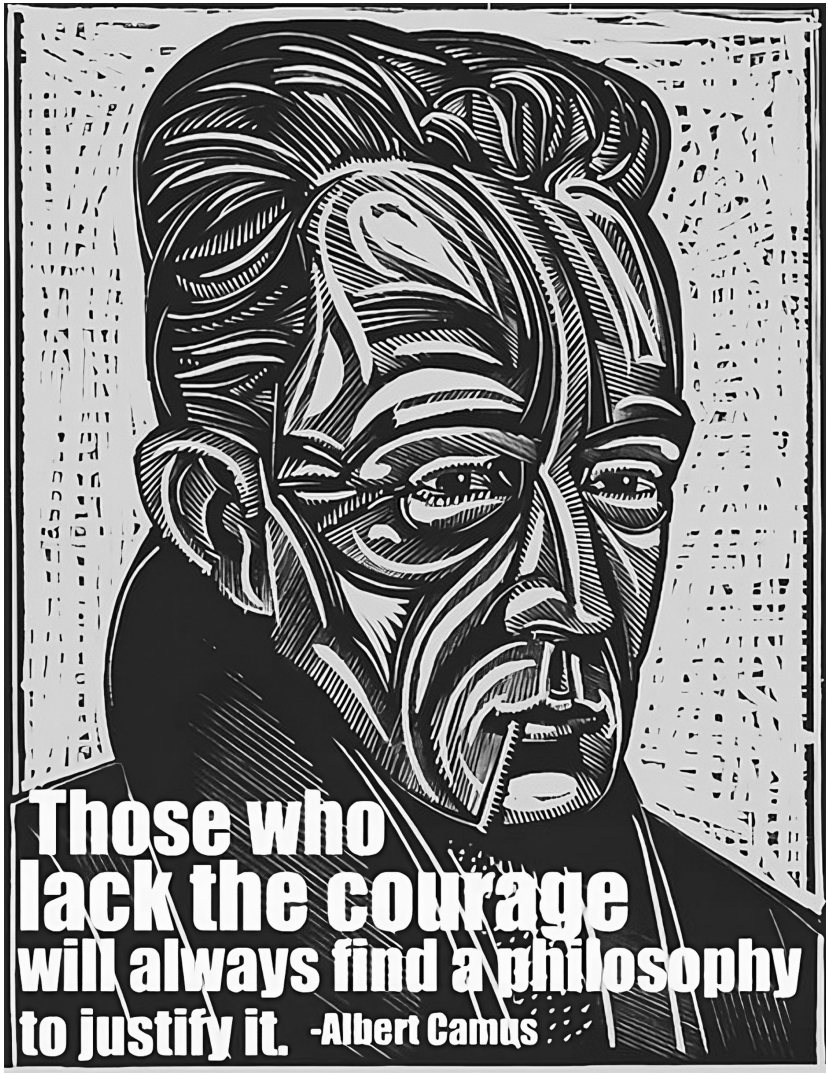
Whisper a message of soft voice
in the ear of a white dove,
and release it in the storm around,
in the sky wounded by nature's strife.

Genesis 2.0

Lucifer said, *"Let There Be God!"*
and all were contrite,
The Devil whispered, *"Checkmate!"*,
and all was UnLight.

In the Bible, Genesis 1.3 says:

"Then God said, "Let there be light,"
and there was light."



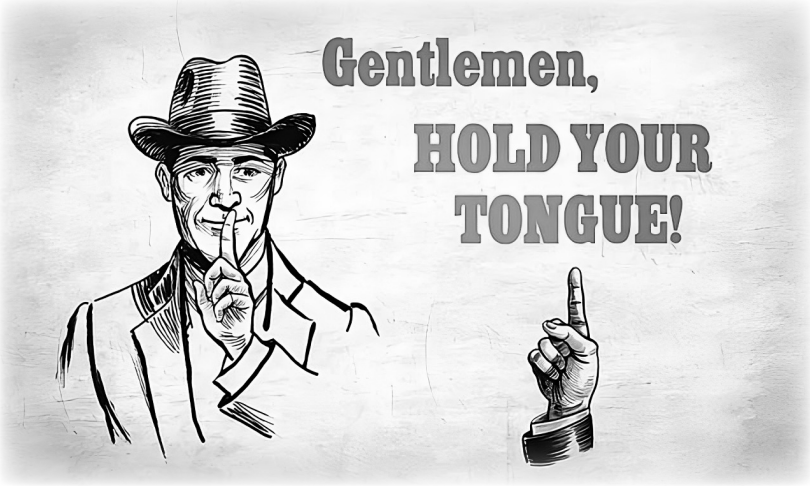
Albert Camus (1913 - 1960) was a French philosopher, writer, and political activist who became the second youngest awardee of the Nobel Prize in Literature, at the age of 44.

Sizzle and Steak

People speak of brave hearts
and medallions of strutting crest;
I… I put my wager on decorated claims
boasting strong lungs to puff the chest.

Restraint

A difficult choice it is,
to hold the tongue
when its whip craves to strike.



Limited

Ugly looks the picture painted by the mirror
with the darkness of our souls...
We, who can choose to write
on infinite skies with divine spark,
wallowing instead
in the tar of petty snark...

Tumult

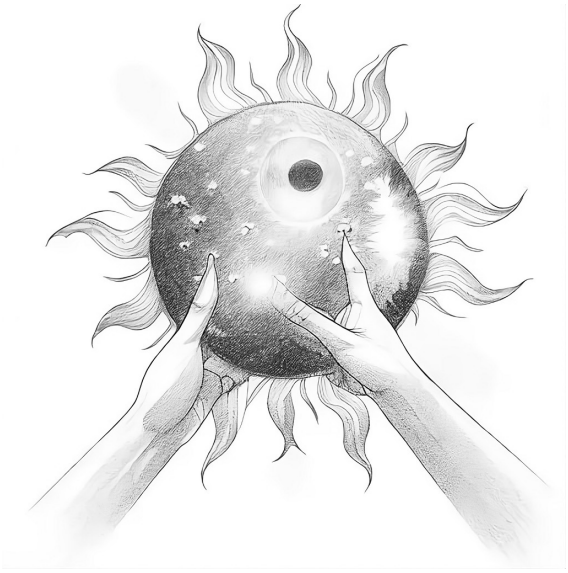
Unsettled by degrees the mind remains,
foments it does those mindless fears,
some, they surf on waves serene,
some, a tsunami of flowing tears…

Linings Silver & Lead

Seeks suffering in unalloyed joy,
that soul suffers down a slippery fall;
sees silvered mirth in fleeting
suffering,
that one lifts high in its luminous call.

Clearing

Let the ruined weeds of relationships burn.
Let new grass take hold on tender ground.



Apparent Only

Hold not the evening sun in the palms,
mistaking its serenity and cool.
The setting sun is still a burning sun,
and never did the reason of dusk douse its fire.

Adverse Weather

Drown we do in the puddles of our egos,
lashed by the tempests of its acid rain.

Scripture

Respect The Book.
Someday, you will Read it.
Another, Understand it.

In Silence...

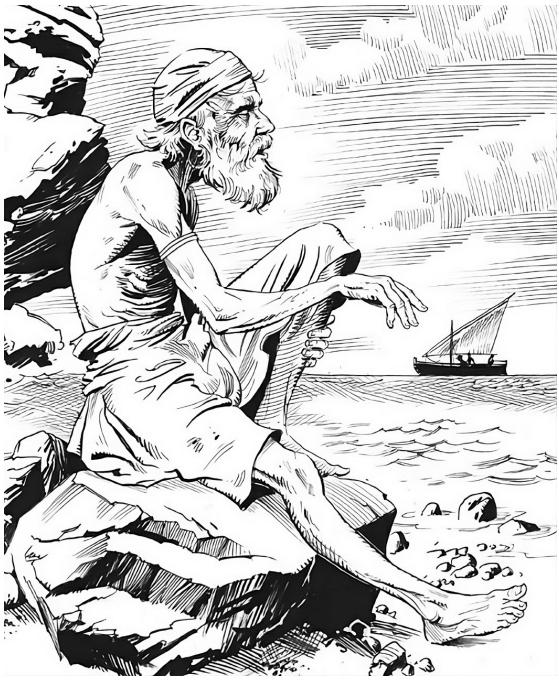
The future is an open book
and most of us are passive readers.
Some pretend to be its writers, too.
The Librarian,
She watches with an indulgent smile.

One Second Per Second

The hourglass conveys the moving message
of the importuning sand's falling cries -
"Heed my time's piling gravity!
Observe! Learn! Open your eyes!"

Unsung Heroes

Read a paen to the stellar woman unkown.
Write a protest against the tyranny of fame.



Sight Unseen

A cheap imitation of life we breathe.
A perfumed brook flows by, unnoticed.

Unpatched

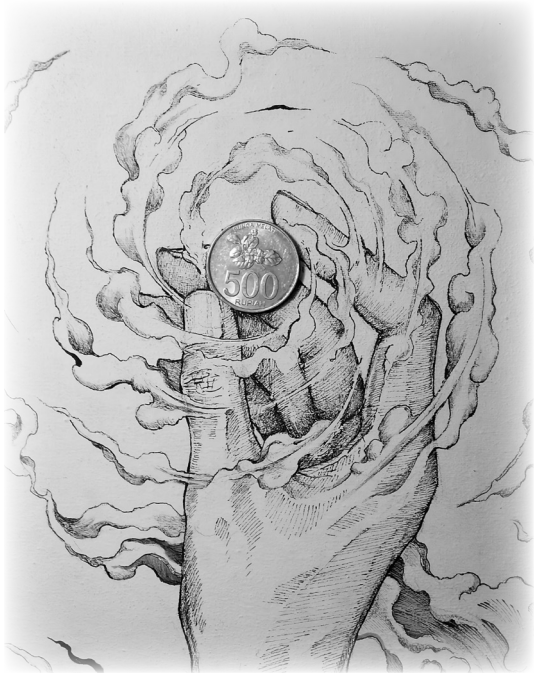
Every conscience is a fabric
    with an incipient tear at one end.
What differentiates us
    is the degree we enable the tear to run.

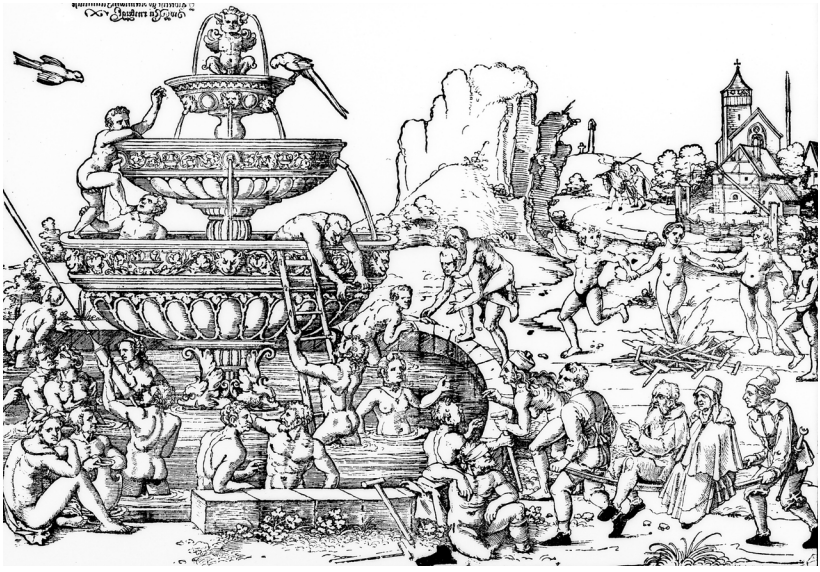
Shallow

Fame is mostly a pool of mirage.
Most who have taken a dip in it
have come up with little
but slime of futility stuck to them.

Creation

‘Hard facts’ and ‘fanciful myths’
are two sides of the cloth
stitched together
by the threads of Maya.



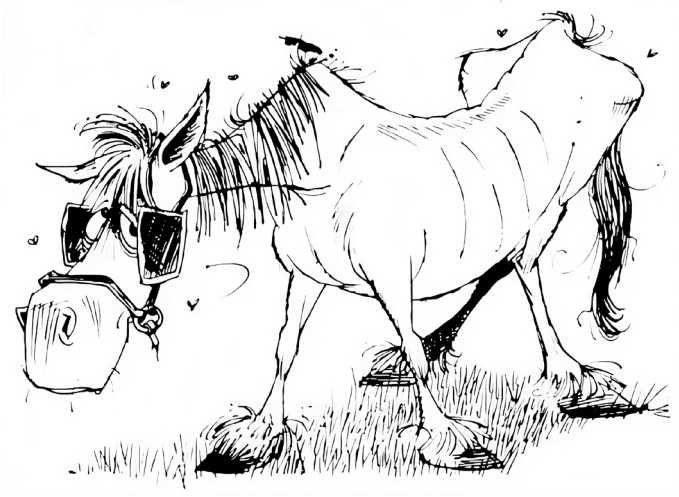


Aging Angst

Indeed the fountain of youth in its breach
recedes from the touch of urgent reach.

Choose

Ignore that a person rides
a moral high horse
or perhaps a shetland pony.
Introspect her thoughts.

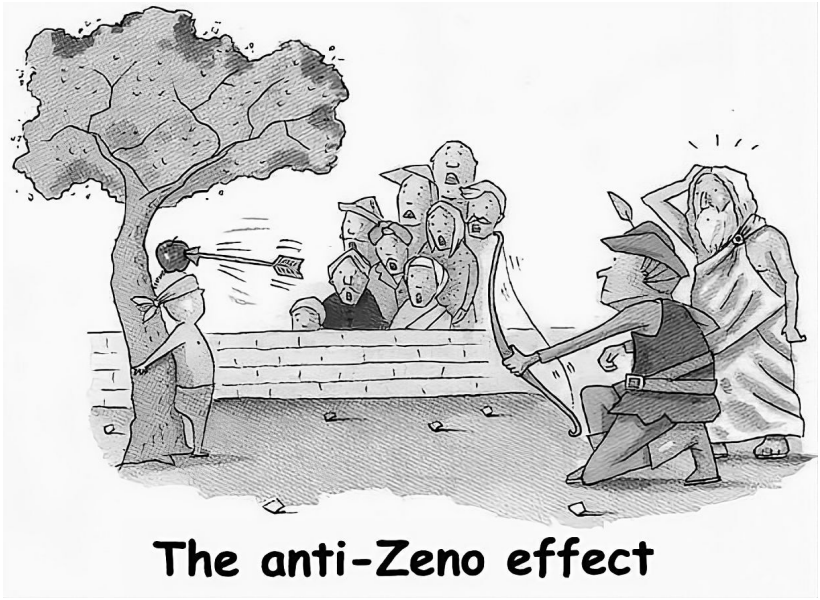


Nugatory

In intense fervor,
the industrious hamster runs fast and fleet,
on fortune's feckless wheel,
in a grind ending in frivolous heat.

Armchair Philosophy

It would have been a delicious irony
if Zeno had been an archer of note…



Zeno (of Elea, Italy) was a 5th BCE philosopher who cast serious doubts on the true existence and nature of space, time, motion, and the concept of infinity. Through sophisticated articulation of various paradoxes involving the characters of Achilles, a rabbit, an arrow, and so on, he kept philsophers busy for two thousand years arguing over their resolutions.

Catharsis

Man does not grasp in his infractions
that it is far easier to attain heaven
than an honest purgatory;
that the chance at happiness
is easy as two-pence,
while an opportunity
for cleansing repentance
is a mirage few can find.

Drink!

May the spirit of my cheers
be at your back, O Sommelier!
And may the cheers of your spirits
be at mine…

Self-Consumed

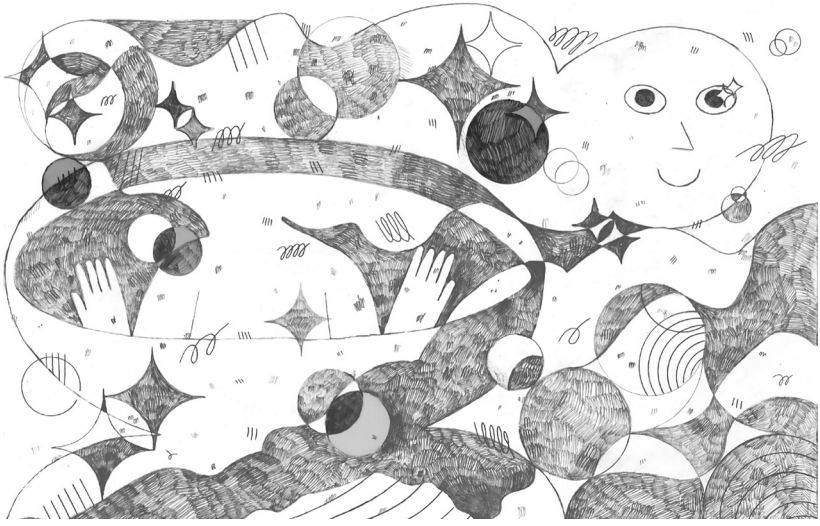
Observe:
The self-destructive vanity of a bonfire.

Acceptance

Old age arrives well when it starts knowing
that the ravages of time are Maya,
an illusion which will shake off at death.

Oneiric

Somewhere amidst the stars
we wander in our sleep....
... If only our dreams
could withstand our waking eyes…



Perspective

The pen may be mightier than the sword
but mostly, it is the simple case
of ink being cheaper than sweat and blood.

Verily, things are harder done than its praise.

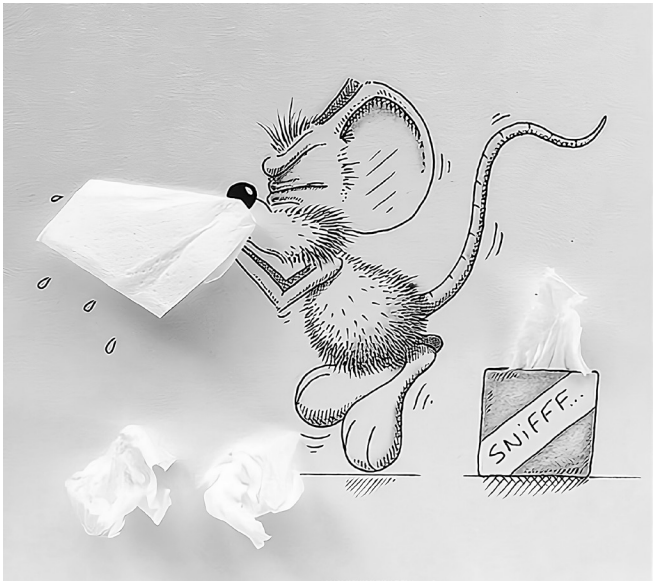
Requires Work, No?

Easy are the wings of lucid words,
easier yet the flight of the carefree tongue,
but leaden be the ears, caged in books,
bound fast to mere teachings sung…

Incompleteness of Godel

The geometry of dusk with its shadows,
meandering in its culprit emotion,
erasing every proven lemma in its wake,
Undecidable, now, every proposition.

Kurt Godel, one of the most powerful logicians ever, shook the foundations of axiomatic mathematics when he proved in 1931 2 theorems in logic which showed that systems of reasoning which are sufficiently complex to include plain arithmetic are necessarily either inconsistent, or cannot be proven to be consistent from within the system. Further, such systems, if consistent, would be necessarily incomplete in a specific sense.



Aachoo!

Say not *"Just a sneeze!"* to belittle its grind,
the orgasmic thunder that roils the mind,
for once the sneeze ravages you through
and through,
it asks, *"'t'was good for me, was it for you?"*

Oblivious Swimmer

Twenty leagues of time the monkey swam;
Twenty again in earnest boat he rowed;
No closer to wisdom was he,
for all those waters on which he gently flowed...

Down-trodden

Inside every woman is a caged tigress,
barred in an iniquitous zoo of society.

Self-Axing

Who in his own jungle snares and poaches
soonest finds company of mice and roaches.

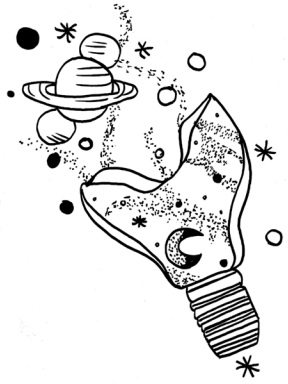
His Holiness

There He walks!
The purveyor of holy water!
The engraver of soiled tablets!
The minter of false coins…

Time Up

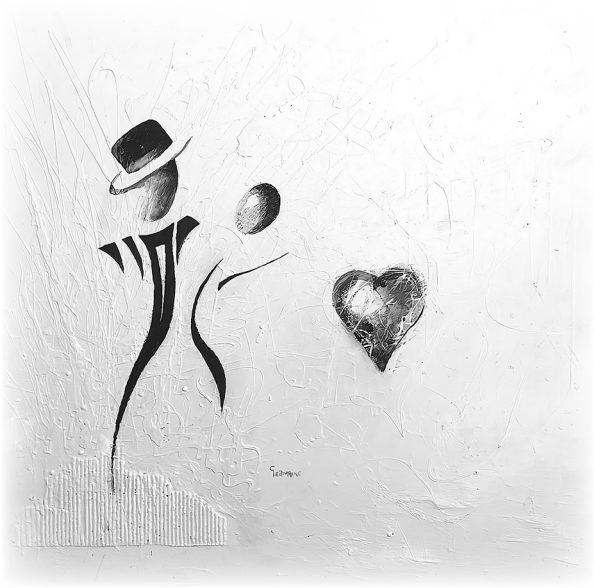
Place an asterisk in the margin of the sky,
for the footnote reads:

"Ready for dismantling"...



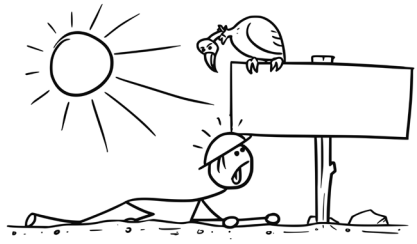
Cheated

Verily, a sigh begets a sigh,
a lie a lie,
love's virtue, it dies
in betrayal's dark dye.



Spilled

Mourned he all,
the empty bottles he had tossed in his barrow...
all that good liquor
drowned in wasteful sorrow…



Chimera

The worldliness of this meagre world,
an ignorant illusory chatter;
Life, it remains an unquenched thirst,
chasing shallow mirage of water.

Depressed

Dank thoughts marinate in wine-dark bile,
unfettered prisoners….
in the dungeons of mind's guile…

Accidental Bump

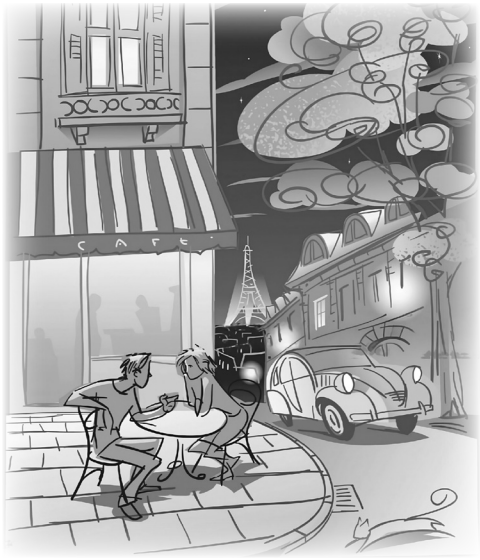
Eyes mine were surely closed,
but where were thine if not on the road?

Dominion's Reach

For words hold their sovereign sway
only till thy iron turns not to clay…

Smell the Roses

Sit. Recount.
Have some tea with a kindred soul, my friend;
for truly, the road to Damascus
    goes through Darjeeling.



The phrase, "The Road to Damascus", has a biblical significance. "The Book of Acts" describes the journey by the future Apostle, Paul, to the city of Damascus. On the way, he met with a radiant image of Jesus even though Jesus had died decades earlier. This encounter converted Paul from being fanatically anti-Christian to its foremost proselytizer. This incident gave us the phrase, "Damascene Conversion", referring to a sudden enlightenment and sea change in one's beliefs.

Darjeeling, of course, is renowned for its perfumed teas.

"Father Time" by artist William Strang (1859-1921), painted in 1899.

Final Analysis...

And when Judgment speaks,
will it matter if the warrior speaks of love
or the tyrant the quality of mercy?

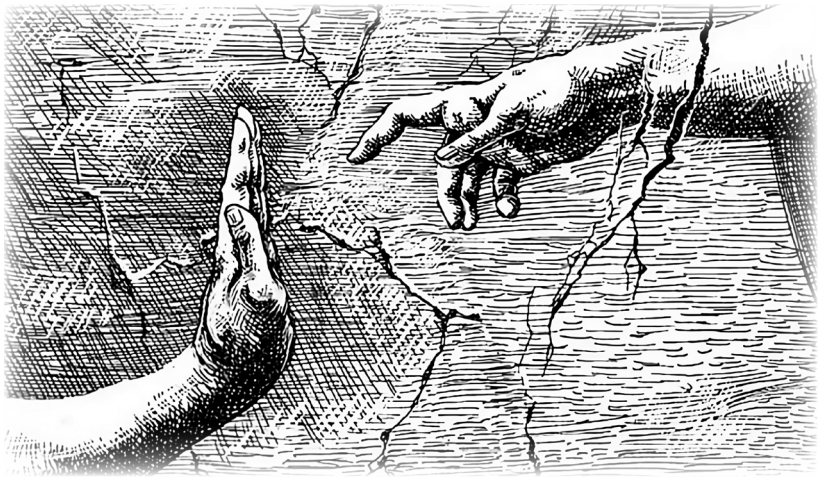
The image depicts "The Last Judgment," a fresco by Michelangelo (1475-1564) on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City. It illustrates the Second Coming of Christ and the final judgment of humanity.

Ignorance, Bliss

Blessed are the young sinners
without news
of the moral storms drowning in the horizon.

Diktats

Oh Writer of Life!
If only your cruel parchment of pronouncements
had sought more erasers than ink…



Leave It Be...

Steal not the precious light of true faith.
Drill not a hole in the readily-wavering sails…

Estimation

Judge not
the paleness of your pious light
against the greedy fire
consuming the soul of the forest.

Duality

A game of few words, this life;
a fugue of dual thoughts;
he who deciphers does free the soul;
the rest they suffer the web it wrought…

Seeker

On a silent voyage travels the great horse,
seeking its own luminous barn…

The illustration, “Across the Night Sky” was done by Dorothy Lathrop (1891-1980) for the book, “Down Adown Derry” by Walter de la Mare in 1922.

Fellowship

Owes every soul to his fellow man
the debt of a sweet song of water and earth.

Address

Truth is a mud hut aspired to by many
but craved by few.
A healthy lie is the shining city
which everyone roams
looking for that hut.

Quivering

No mortal man has cheated death,
    beggar, pauper or rex;
he who lives in fear incessant,
    ends as a smeared X.

Malala Yousafzai (1997-) is the youngest winner of the Nobel Prize in history, having been awarded the Peace prize in 2014 for her inordinate amount of courage in standing up to the Pakistani Taliban.

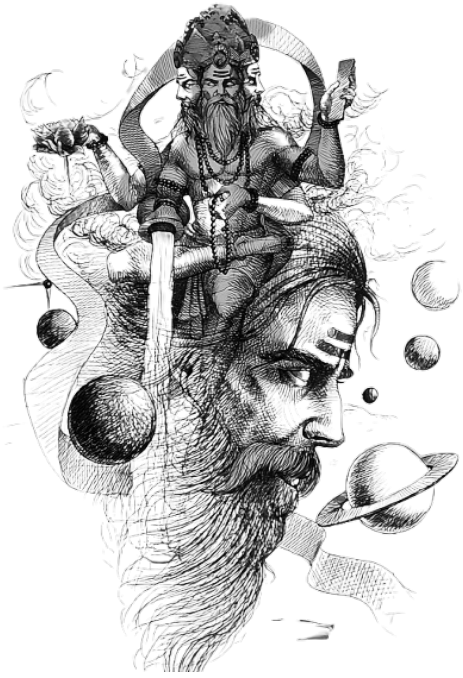
Past is Prologue

"What is it you seek here?",
the Barbarian eyed the civilized man.

"I hear there be a tree of thornless rosetta here",
replied the educated axe,
"with supple wood, and a fragrance to bind."

The barbarian cried
in the musky memory of the blue rose.

Painting by French artist, Jean “Moebius” Giraud (1938-2012).



Research

Watch!
Here be the stragglers and scribblers of life
who wish to copy from God's exam paper.

Murder, She Wrote

Beware the dark arts of blood,
a play of red ink in dying quills…

"Saint Paul Writing" is a woodcut by the German artist, Hans Holbein the Younger (1497-1543). It depicts the Apostle, Saint Paul, writing on religion while maintaining a sword and a loom by his side.

Smile!

Pray, how the teeth shine,
let me count the ways,
but why account in ledgered page,
when one is all that's needed to slay…

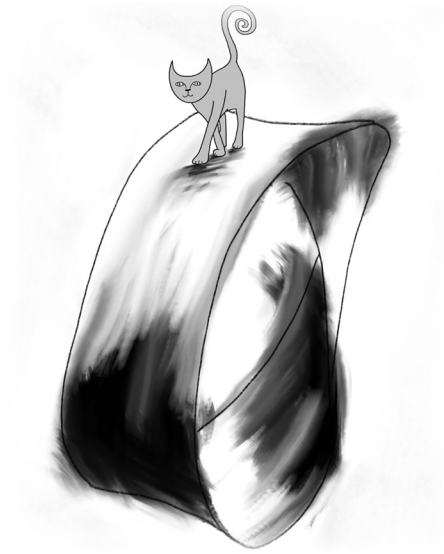
Engendered

Question not love's gay abandon,
contain not its euphoric diffusion,
Eros flies the skies of free spirit,
the tinder of sensual spark spritely lit.

Eros was the Greek god of erotic love, similar to Cupid but more powerful.

Mobius Tripped

There are no dead ends on a circular path,
and yet,
how wonderful that would have been!



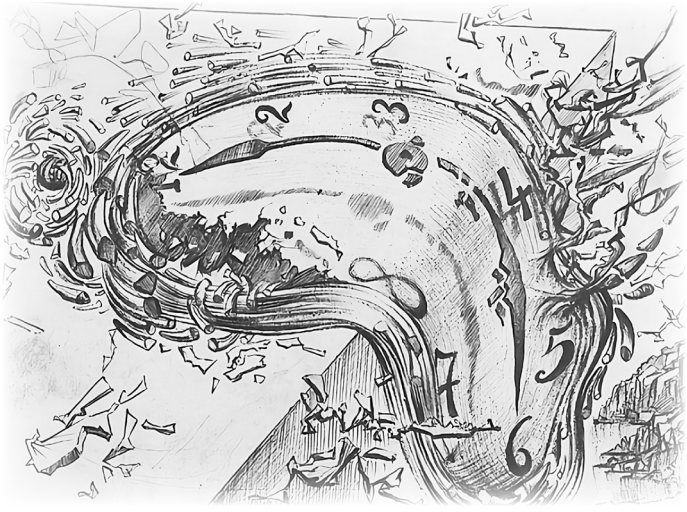
A "Mobius Strip" is a geometric object which has only a single side in a specific sense (unlike a paper sheet which has 2 sides). It can be constructed by gluing together the ends of a rectangular strip after first giving one of the ends a half-twist. While the object was known to Romans as early as the third century AD, in modern times it was discovered independently and simultaneously by the mathematicians, Johann Listing and Augustus Mobius in 1858.

Revolving

Every door a strange realm's token;
as one shuts does another open…

Recurrence

Time puts its rust on all things mortal,
and blames it on entropy, her second child;
a mother sacrificing her begotten many,
so Nature would renew from the chaos in wild…



Entropy is a concept from fundamental physics which captures the notion that unless one puts in effort and energy into maintaining a system, it almost always tends toward more disorder. A precise statement of this is known as the "Second Law of Thermodynamics".

Lucifer's Gambit

We may all pretend to be ardent followers
of Allah, Ram, and Jesus,
but in the end,
our real pied piper
is the one with a sly smile and two horns...
and all he needs do
is scatter some gold and god
to tempt our scorn…

Humility - The Psalm of Alms

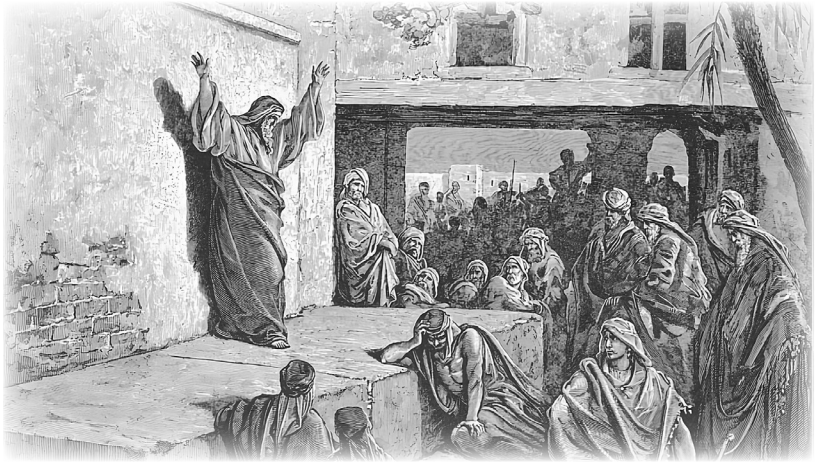
It is never what you want,
but what nature gives.
Take it, but never forget:
it was given, not earned.

Confessional

Alas! To have cheated so widely,
and regretted only once!

Dominoes...

Every prophet of Civilization bears the cross
of making an ugly situation uglier.



An illustration by famed artist, Gustav Dore ("Goostaav Dawray", 1832-1883), showing Prophet Micah exhorting the Israelites to repent.

Without Leash...

The rhetoric of excessive Virtue
lights bright in our heart,
and one day,
burns down all of humanity.

"The Day of Pentecost", fulfilled in Jerusalem when the holy spirit appeared as tongues of fire on the heads of the faithful followers of Jesus. This engraving was by the Dutch artist, Adriaen van der Werff (1659-1722), who was a painter of devotional, religious as well as erotic scenes.

Tutelage

The characters of men are shaped
by those who feed their bellies and minds.

The Last Mile

In your innermost breast springs virtuous
the love for fellow man,
in the outermost
does it dry in vain...

Both artworks are by the Czeck artist, Frantisek Kupka (1871-1957).

Of the Ocean and Shiny Pebbles...

In the Infinite Corridors of Revelation we roam
breathing in the air of ancient, arcane
knowledge...

...and in that mysterium, all we do
is weave puzzles of thin air and shallow vapor,
admiring ourselves as the image of divinity,
in the Mirror of Ignorance
in the Hall of Wisdom...

Unveiling

There are self-evident axioms
beyond the shadows of doubt.
If only we could shake off
these shadows of the mind…

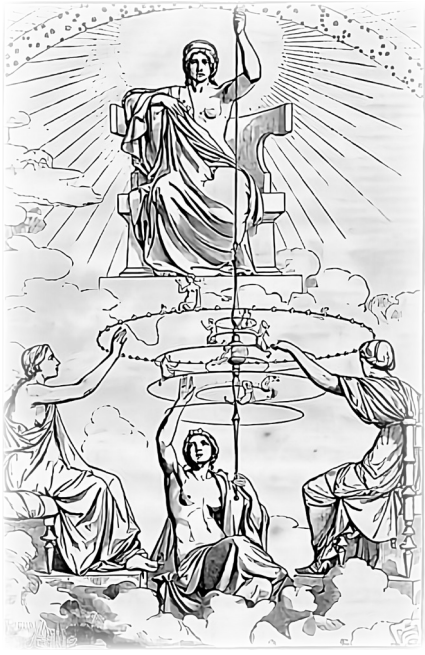
Hither and Yon

Every moment, every beat of heart,
she quizzes her riddled puzzles;
lost and seeking so hither, so tither,
the soulmate this Shadow nuzzles.

In Greek mythology, Echo was a nymph who was cursed by Goddess Hera so that she could only repeat the last words spoken to her. Echo fell in love with the god, Narcissus, and kept repeating his words to attract him. Eventually, he did see her, but rejected her love. Is that not also a story of our eternal quest for the unknown, and the irony of not seeing what is right next to us?

Master & Commander

The future shall remain a mystery, no doubt,
for who has fathomed Time's grain?
Rewrite the tales the Fates wrote,
dare Action to wrest Life's reins…



In Greek mythology, the Fates were 3 sisters known as "Moirai", representing the personified forms of Destiny. The Moirai ensured that all mortal and divine beings lived out their destinies as assigned to them by Nature.

Covetous

Huff not on vapors of desire in life's decanter,
burn not your future down to folly's dust,
fill not your hour-glass with wasted fire,
in drinking someone else's middling thirst.

Genesis 3:19

Written in burning ash and dust
the storied courtship of ruin's lust…

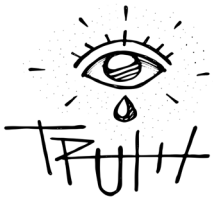
Genesis 3:19, ESV: *"By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

Contrasts

Agreement, division, punishment, cleaves,
love, jealousy, stratagems for grief.

Oxy-Irony

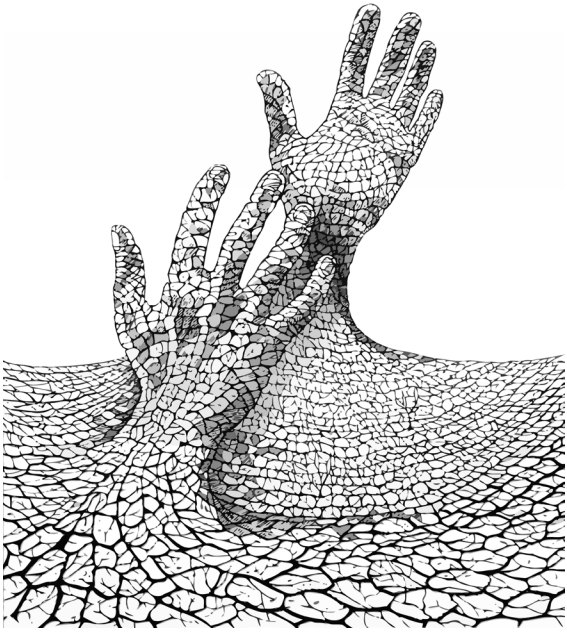
A sad tune and shape it is
of the callous world overall,
the deaf alone does empathize
with the mute's mournful call.



Destinies of men and even most gods are controlled by 3 sisters, collectively referred to as "Moirae" in Greek Mythology. They are *"Clotho, the Spinner"*, who spins out the thread of life, *"Lachesis, the Allotter"* who measures out the length of the thread for each person and assigns the period of life, along with its vagaries, and *"Atropos, the Inflexible"*, who cuts the thread of life, representing death.

Just Saying...

The incessant high-priests of complaints fine
change not an ounce of Fate's written lines.

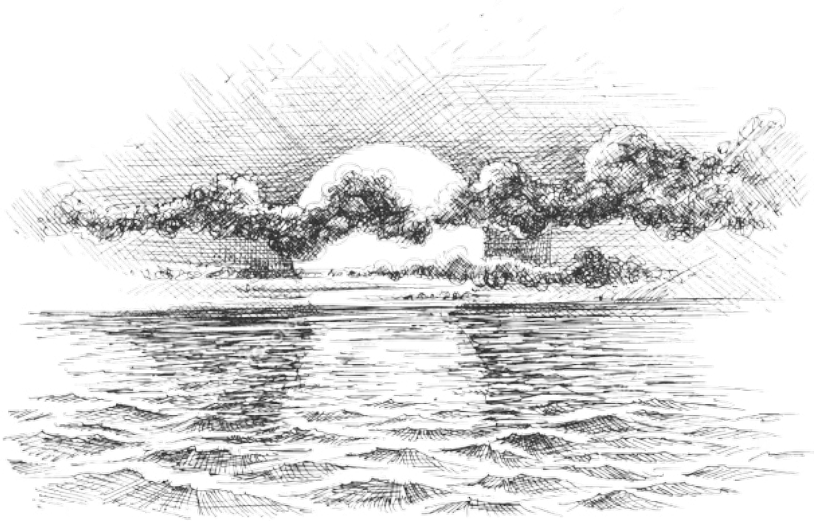


Empath

Feel the pain of this hurting earth
before you're rendered one with her…

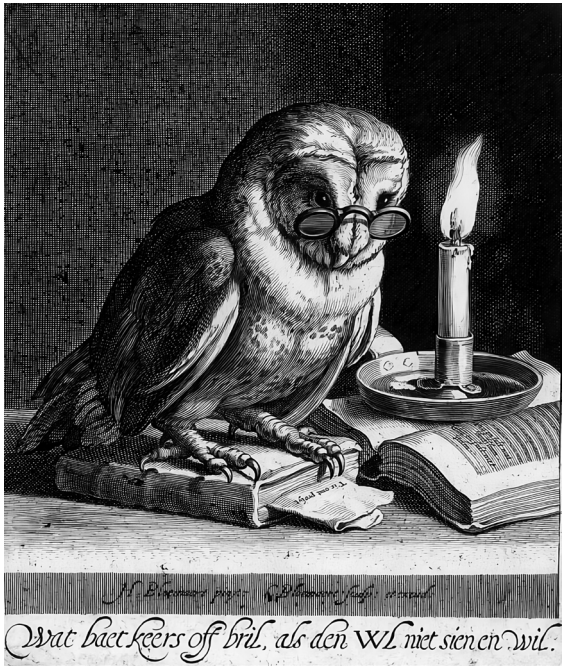
Psalm of Dusk

The angry orb restrains his flames
in deference to the charms of the night,
in salt and balm of the cooling sea
with burning footsteps he alights.



Aspiration...

Burn your candle bright, yes!
Spend your light, as Milton did...



The image of the owl is an antique woodcut, with a Flemish proverb inscribed, translating to, *"Of what use are the candle or glasses if the owl refuses to see?"*

John Milton (1608-1674) was one of the greatest English writers, famous for many notable works, including "Paradise Lost", an epic poem occupying 12 volumes…

Narrow Vision

A mighty tree falls along the road,
and all the fool sees
is fuel in hull so laid;

Oh! such vibrant potential…
axed to ashes...
by the woodcutter's dull blade…

A Bane Urbane

At the heart of society's mundane matters
an essential tear of deception persists,
the warp and woof of the conscious cloth
tied in knots in its unraveling twist.

Deserted Love...

Pouring from a thirsty jug,
she asks of my silent suffering...
if it isn't a sprinkling of salt
on a Saharan wound ...

"Satan Descend's on Earth" was one of the 50 illustrations which the famous artist, Gustav Dore ("Goostaav Dawray", 1832-1883) made for the epic poem, "Paradise Lost" by the legendary English writer, John Milton (1608-1674). It shows Satan descending to wander around Eden with the thought of tempting Eve.

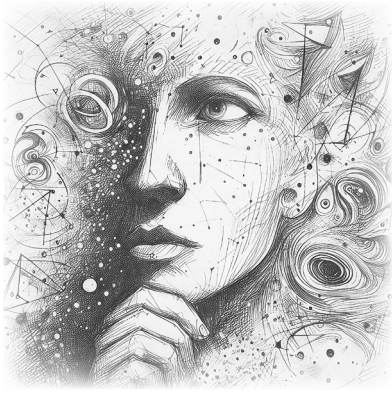
Perdition's Lot

Who dreamt this pride, the lion's share,
of man's hubris, mind's tangled snare?
Wherefore this anger's fraying reins,
as devil's choir singing dirges of virtues slain?

The illustration is based on a famous painting, "The Fall of Icarus", by Italian artist Antonio Tempesta (1555-1630), depicting the fatal flight of Icarus, the one who flew too close to the sun on the wings of wax...

Unearth

Oh Fool, listen! Wise men have well-advised:
"Cleave the divisions of life!", their apothem;
riddle the questions of mystical depth,
churn out many a Quintessence's gem.



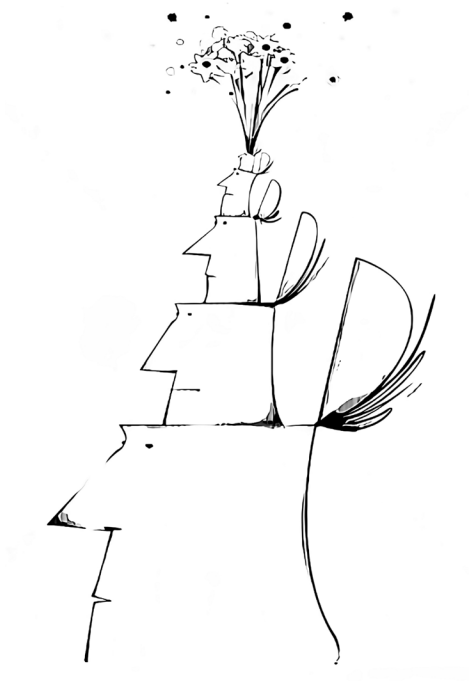
There Be a Dragon...

When times omen adversity,
the ears seek refuge of silence..
and the tongue…
ahh… the dear tongue…
she discovers her poisoned violence…

A Finer Thought

"Emotion, like motion, does not exist",
bemoaned Zeno's lover.

Zeno (of Elea, Italy), a 5th BCE philosopher who cast serious doubts on the true existence and nature of space, time, motion, and the concept of infinity, "demonstrating" with impeccable logic that motion and the ability to move cannot - should not - exist.



The Lettered One

A wise, laconic man
is a chapter wrapped up in a sentence;
an exercise in precis writing.

Logical

Both, the optimist
and the pessimist
inside you,
"know"
the other does not exist.

Reconcile.

Foundations

Deep are the stakes
holding the bonds enmeshed,
as memories of friendship
which childhood blessed…

Pusillanimous

In perpetual quest of greed do people engage,
trampling perceptual principles
with incestuous rage.

Word Wish

Hide me inside your book,
a lucky leaf of wisdom…

Phantasmagoria

The saints have fathomed the secret,
this body mere husk for inner light;
greed, desire, love, and other myths,
but the good Lord's testing grounds of delight.

Luminos?

Selfish are the myriad desires of our minds,
stand they not a scrutiny up close in their nude,
clothe them in a veneer of displayed charity,
else it all be lurid… ungraceful… rude…

Arousal

It was an amorous couple, it was!
Ah, such was passion's frisson!
Left quietly, I did,
with innocence wrapped around my vision.

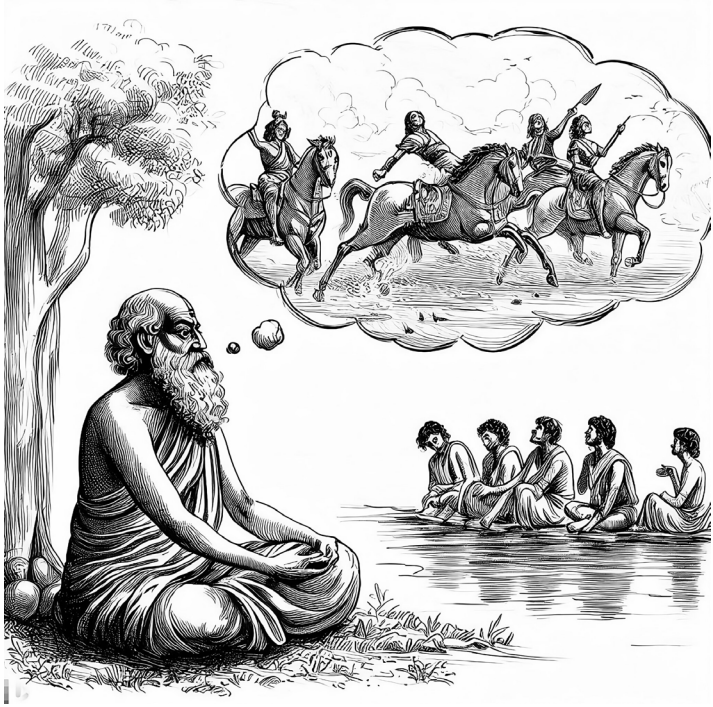
For the Asking...

When December surveys its snow,
and August beams with pride at its sunflowers,
life knows
there are simple joys scattered in time
for man to pick and choose….

Decide.

Causality

The coat-of-arms rains a coat of ash;
in communion with your soul
wrest its greeding lash.



Contra-Currents

Survey with passive indifference
these contradictions
which weave the air around us;
they are the breeze which binds the world
with its human ties of lies and love.

"Giuochi di Fortuna" is a painting by Italian artist, Giovanni Battista Bonacina (1620-1664), depicting Father Time, a winged reaper with an hourglass, playing dice with Fortune, who stands on her wheel. A winged Cupid, bow at his feet, and Fortune balance a game board on the world. Cupid gestures toward the hourglass indicating that time will eventually win out.

For Twists and Giggles...

To trifle with the commoner exists the caravan
of mundane annoyances sapping the mirth;
the amused, they preside the empyrean,
the puppets, they till the earth.

"Il Pomo D'Oro" is a painting by German artist, Mathaus Kusel (1629-1681).

An Angst...

The spaces between her written lines
they speak to me still…

… and in the stillness of my beating heart
the rose petals fall one by one...

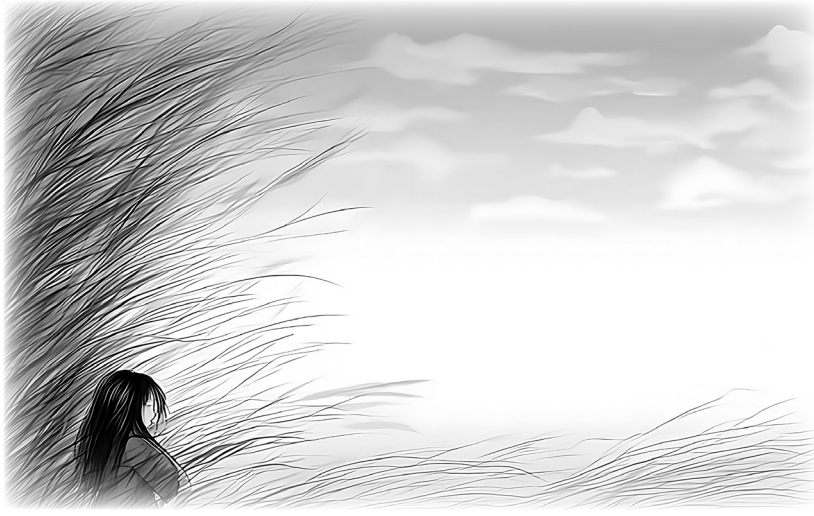
not telling if she loves me...
or if she sees me not...

Dreamy

No warrior, I,
no arrows on me;
Just peace...
and a quiverful of desires…

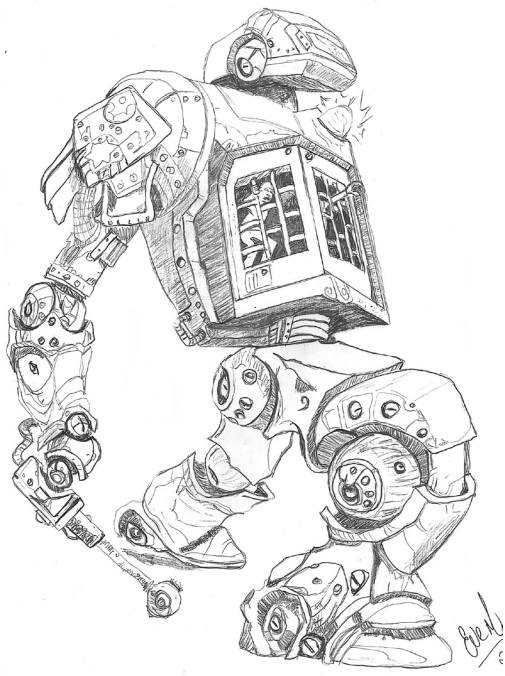
Lover's Grief

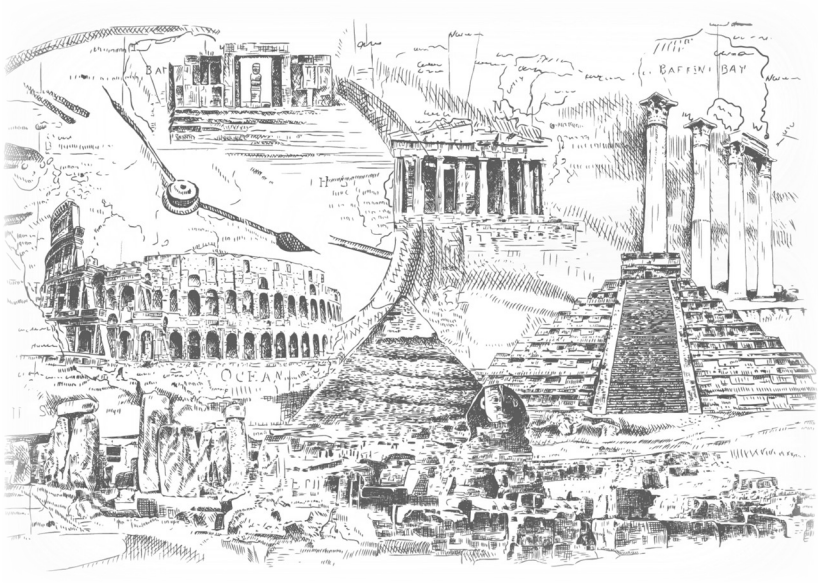
A cumulus of youthful errors,
soars o'er ecstasy's grounds beneath...
in a trifle season's wet grief
do the rains take their toll...
for as vibrant timber did love rise to the zenith;
as dry lumber it weighs now on the lost soul...



Short Circuit

The calculating machines,
of ironed silicon and organic silk,
pervade this selfish milieu,
living on borrowed electrons of emotions,
and adulterated voltage between the ilk.



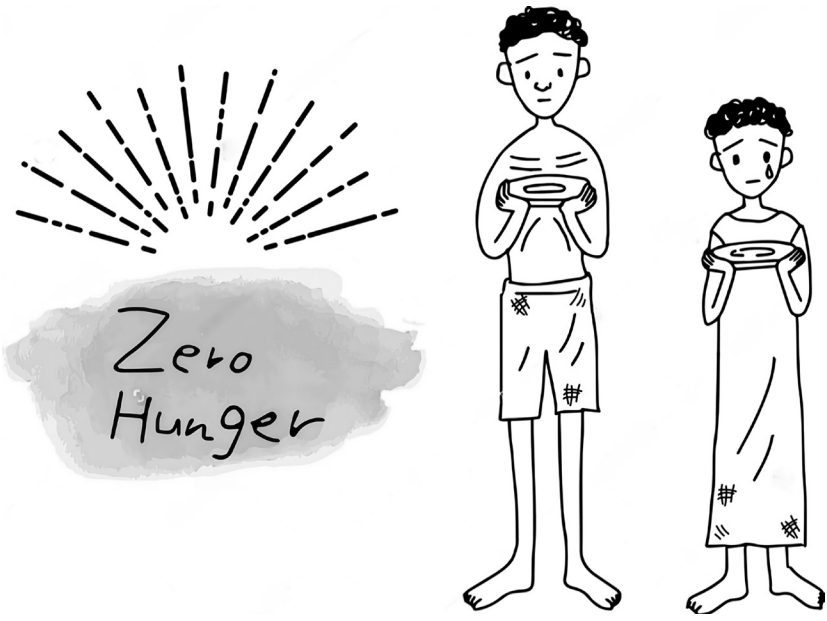


Comrades-in-Arms

Have companions armed with courage,
and distant horizons we go a-spoilin';
and they with tit-mice heart,
they strum their wails on vocal violins...

Slip on the Sly

In human affairs,
ethics are the ship
which can sail by under a lighthouse
in the dead of the moonless night,
undetected…



Pangs

The grinding hand of poverty mocks
the hungry spirit of humanity.

Quantumania

The laws remain faithful to themselves.
It is man who adulterates them in interpretation.

En Français...

What is love but a kiss of confusion...
What's a kiss but lips speaking of love...
and the two…
just amour's rap thrust into passion.

The Pleasures of Mind

A teaser's wandering mind
is the teaser's unwinding dress,
uncovering layers by the thought,
perhaps a bit more, perhaps a bit less…

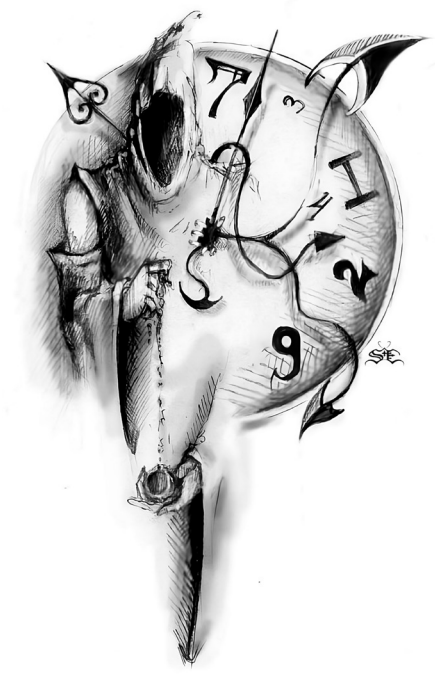
And Vice-Versa!

Many a human problem,
as in mathematics,
is long in distance
and short on epiphany.

From Ashes to Empyrean

Man…
a tool of passion,
an earthen pot of water and spirit.
A mixture of mud and rain,
raised above mere existence as petrichor...

Let us live up to that boast, that promise,
not deplete the bountiful well of creation
through avarice and unrestraint…

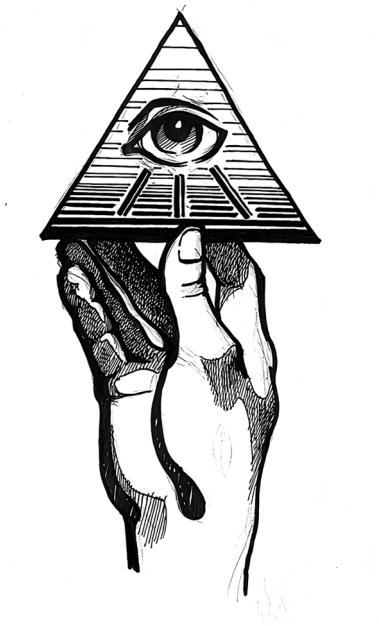


Judge and Jury

The mind stays trapped in slim illusions,
counting the rosary in Desire's clime;
Unseen, in patience, counts beads of moments,
moment by moment, thy Father Time...

Crestfallen

She wept
    for that which could have been!
For a world
    which did not have to be
        so insensitive in its creed,
but *had been*...
And for what!
But little bits
    of unkind selfishness…



Spectrum

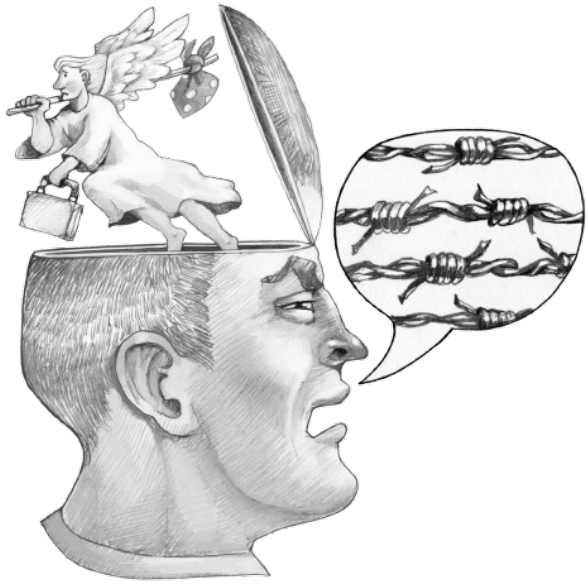
Often does the ersatz world shine
the aura of nine shades
and a false halo.

Prismatic is the wise vision…

"After Polidoro Da Caravaggio" is a painting by Dutch artist, Hendrik Goltzius (1558-1617). It was copied from a fresco on the facade of a Roman house by the Italian painter, Polidoro Da Caravaggio (1499-1543), a pupil of legendary artist, Raphael (1483-1520). It depicts the Roman god, Neptune, standing in a niche holding a trident and foliage.

Cut Them Down...

In this province of false prophets,
always are the barbarians at the gates,
guarding the doors of ethics,
wielding tridents of Morality's weight.



Trespassers

Jealousy and ego walk irreverent,
trampling courtesy, esteem in jest,
and lo! the shadows of suspicion gather,
self-doubts be pesting guests...

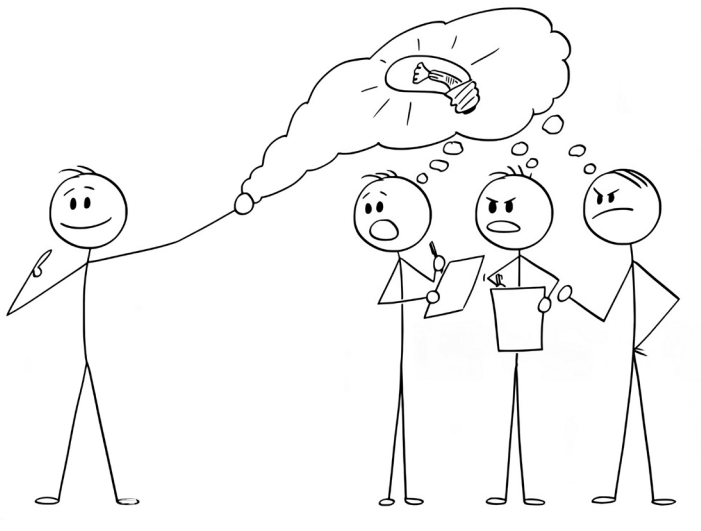
Churchillian

There are times when the eyes open wide
and a man sees more than a man was meant to see;
but the vision slips away without memory
and slides he back right into his mundane reality…

Winston Churchill had once said, *"I had a feeling once about Mathematics - that I saw it all. Depth beyond depth was revealed to me - the Byss and Abyss. I saw - as one might see the transit of Venus or even the Lord Mayor's Show - a quantity passing through infinity and changing its sign from plus to minus. I saw exactly why it happened and why the tergiversation was inevitable but it was after dinner and I let it go."*

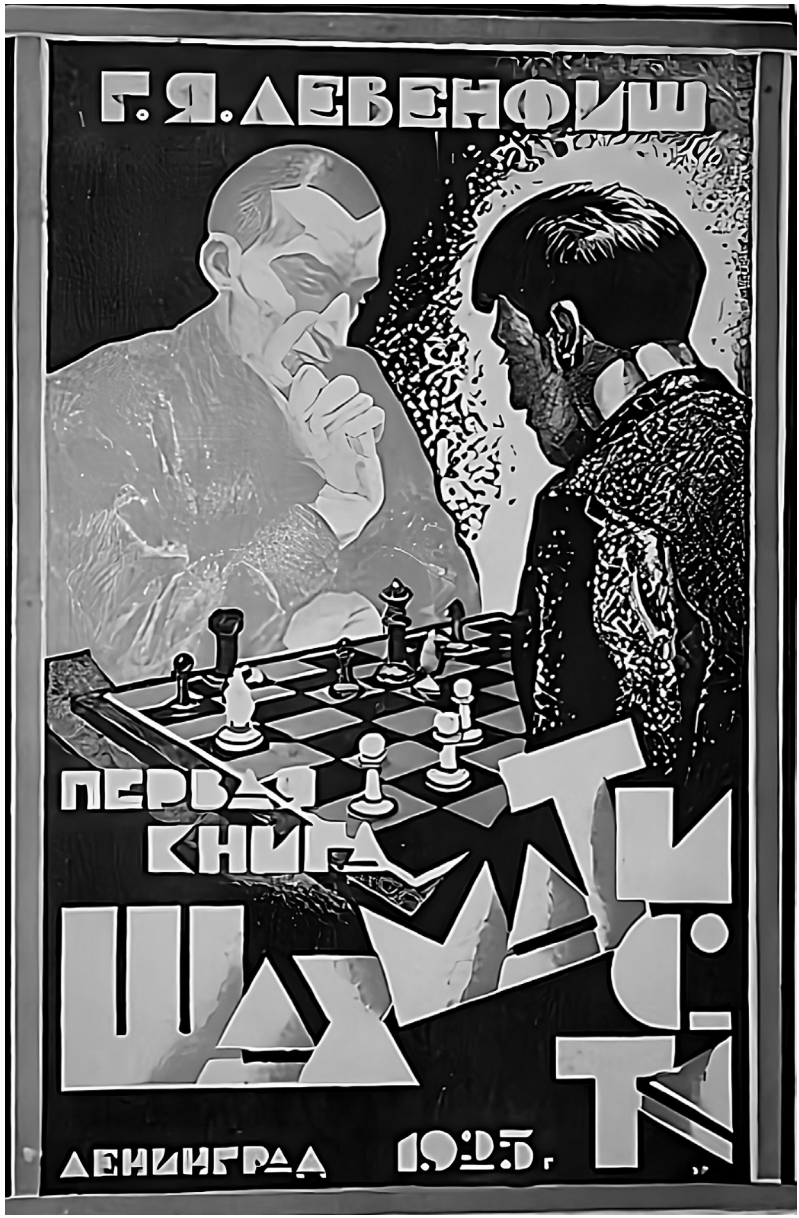
Lazy Minds

We bestow upon ourselves imagined honors
and accolades borrowed from others,
not sharing in the communal joy of genius,
but exulting in mirrored glories of self…



Common Industry

Lo! We all be mighty captains
of paper boats and industrious oars!
For we till in rutted heat,
just barren marshes as mindless boars…



The cover of the book, "Pervaya Kniga Shakhmatista" ("The First Book of a Chess Player") by Soviet writer, Grigory Levenfish, published in 1925.

Constant Chess of History

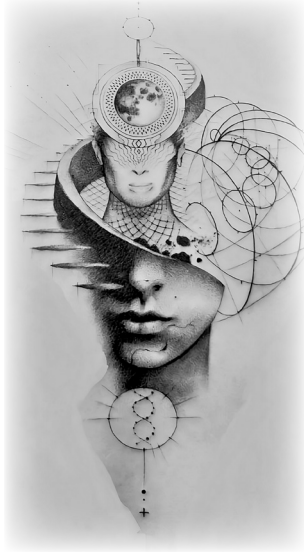
There they stood in contrapositions,
as history smiled her crooked snide,
the Army of Hubris in dudgeon high,
in hauteur the Army of Sinful Pride…

Reverse Psychology

Drink deep of the apathy you see around;
for the river of tears has dried,
and thirst has lost its meaning.

Wisdom's Way

Experience extracts its pay,
even as life's pages are lost,
every knot kindling your thought,
and yet, thought all for naught,
cause ends it all in memory's lanes
in unsated fire (had said Frost)…



The first stanza of Robert Frost's fine poem, "Fire and Ice" goes:

> *"Some say the world will end in fire,*
> *Some say in ice.*
> *From what I've tasted of desire*
> *I hold with those who favor fire."*

This is a mural called “Te Kotuku Rerenga Tahi” (“The Heron of Single Flight”), made in 1953 by New Zealand artist, Ernest Mervyn Taylor (1906-1964). It was used in a poster, “Treasures and Landmarks”, for an exhibition in 1990 by the National Art Gallery and Museum of New Zealand.

Buddha in Plato's Cave...

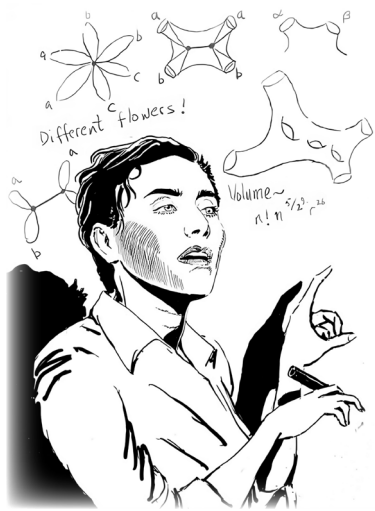
We all be a Prayer & a Sin
balanced on narrow edge,
beading delicate words
of emotions in stammer,
playing out our roles
in Plato's luminal Cave,
aspiring to rewrite
the Book of Gods and Knaves,
scribbling out our hymnal lyrics
to a strange grammar…

"Plato's Cave" is a deep allegory devised by Plato to highlight the limited perception of true reality which our narrow senses give us.

An antique line engraving of the immortal mathematician, Euclid of Alexandria (c 325 BC-265 BC).

A Lemma

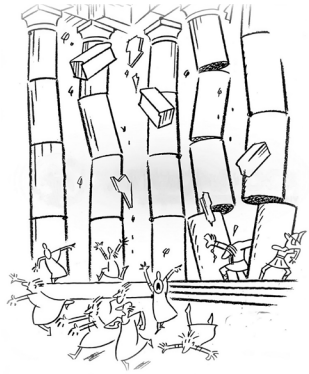
On the side stands in humility
the toiling Mathematician, forsooth,
whose soul burden of toiling proof,
is a simple kernel of Truth..."



Maryam Mirzakhani (1977-2017), whose portrait appears here, was a brilliant Iranian mathematician whose pioneering work won her the prestigious Fields Medal in mathematics in 2014, making her the first woman to do so. Unfortunately, she passed away of breast cancer at a very young age of 40. In her honor, May 12 of each year is celebrated as "International Women in Mathematics" Day.

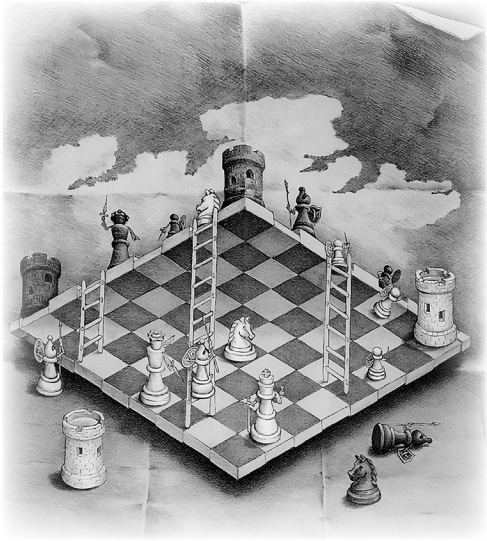
No?

Are we not governed
by fears of truths
and falsehoods of fears?



A Chicken Thought...

Vigilance never hurts,
for the beams holding up the sky
may be weakening…



Religion's Warp (and Woof)

Of what covenants do we speak,
of which Time has no integrity
and history has lost memory?

Reddish Tape

Never doubt the intention
    of the officious bureaucrat.

His leash is long,
his patience infinite,
and his goal in life:
    your personal misery
        at the profit
            of mere affirmation of his power.

Bouquet of Time

It is only on his deathbed that man sets aside
the chronology of the world,
and lives his fullness,
the kairology of his life blooming in his vision
as he breathes his last…

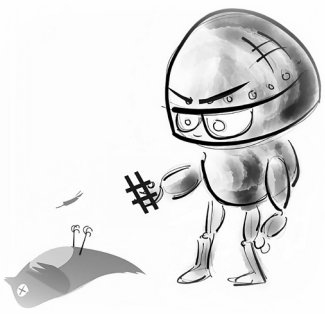
"Kairological" time looks at events not chronologically but orders them according to their experiential value and emotions associated with them.

Facsimile

I am a plagiarized mirror.
The world has copied me shamelessly.

Vacuous Ways...

A simple rule governs the unexamined life:
You come across a hole in the ground,
you pick it up.



An art Deco poster from the 1920s, “Ceylon at Night”, commissioned by the Government Travel Bureau, Ceylon.

Aglow

Rest not your back against the setting sun.
The evening has lit its burn for the night.

Reach!

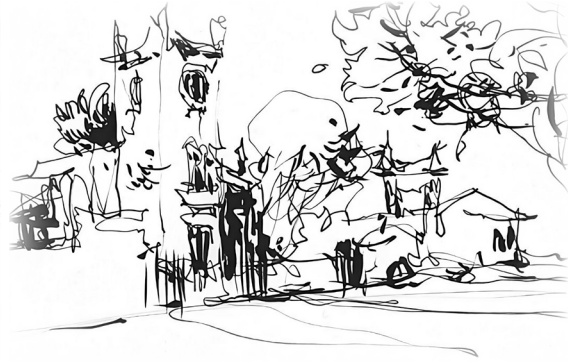
Stars are not brought to us by death and afterlife;
their brilliance is in the reach
if only for those drunk on imagination...

Free Ranging

Set your messenger doves free;
some may bring back kernels of missing
knowledge.

A Chattering Thought

Nobody cares!
Ahh, the indifferent fate of soliloquy!



Of Those With Means...

The afternoon reposes itself
against a delicate morning and a full belly
of repast,
calmly brushing aside
the blazing sun from a stately shade,
taking only what it needs from the fire-orb
to illuminate its vision of a burning world…

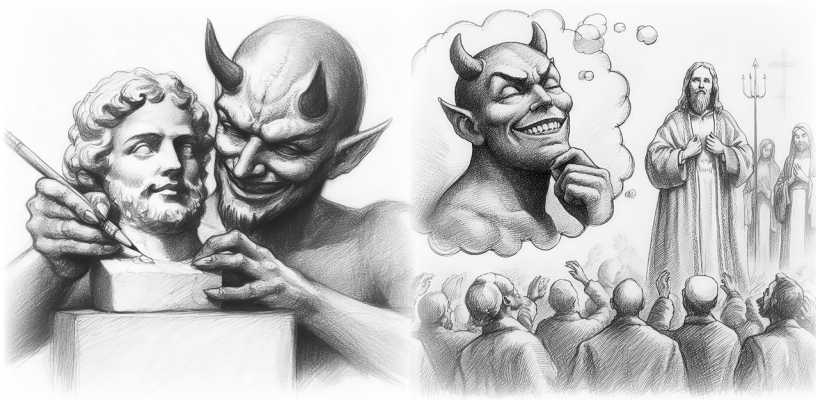
Amnesiac

Memory, O fickle formless frisson!
Thou leaves me, as she,
        at the altar midstream!
No loss, her thoughts,
        for who is she but a jilting jest!
But you, dear muse,
as master Milton proclaimed,
        thou art heavenly
        even if she an empty dream…

The Original Weapon of Mass Destruction

Wise people doth say:
"The greatest trick the Devil ever picked
was convincing the world
He did not exist!"

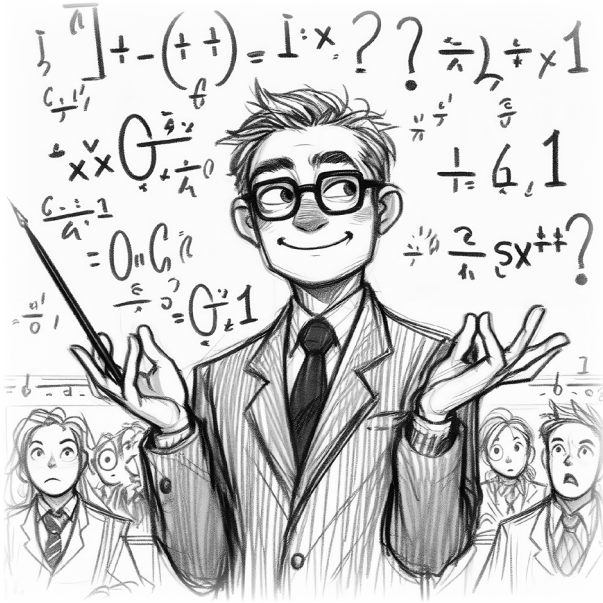
Well, surely:
A greater wool o'er eyes He ever pulled
was convincing the world
a moral God ruled…



The words in quote have been attributed to many people, including Charles Baudelaire, going back to John Wilkinson.

Arm Yourself!

Verily is a problem Undecidable
when one means to prove without the means.



Chalk Goes the Easel

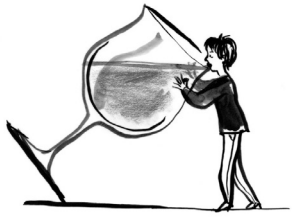
Imagine that professor of mathematics,
that devious son of an algebraic gun,
using imaginary chalk in the air
to draw the square root of minus one…

The Final Wager

All the ardent pleadings had tired,
exhausted in their importuning amble,
and now, in the shadow of the holy mosque,
Faith's recourse presided over the last gamble…

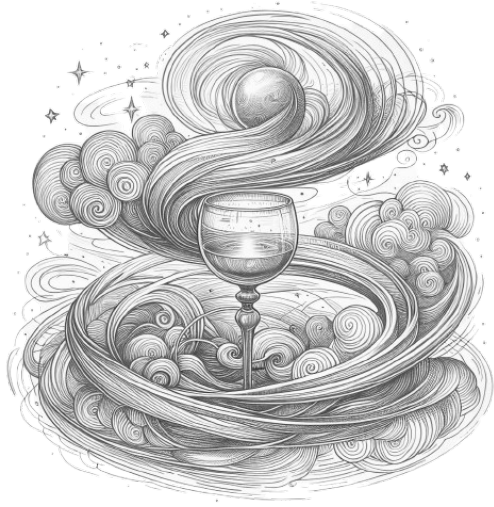
A Shivering...

The leaf of lotus waved on the pond,
untouched by the chiffon waters.
Slaked, and in joy, no doubt.
Then a drop of rain embraced it,
running a thrill down its parched stalk.



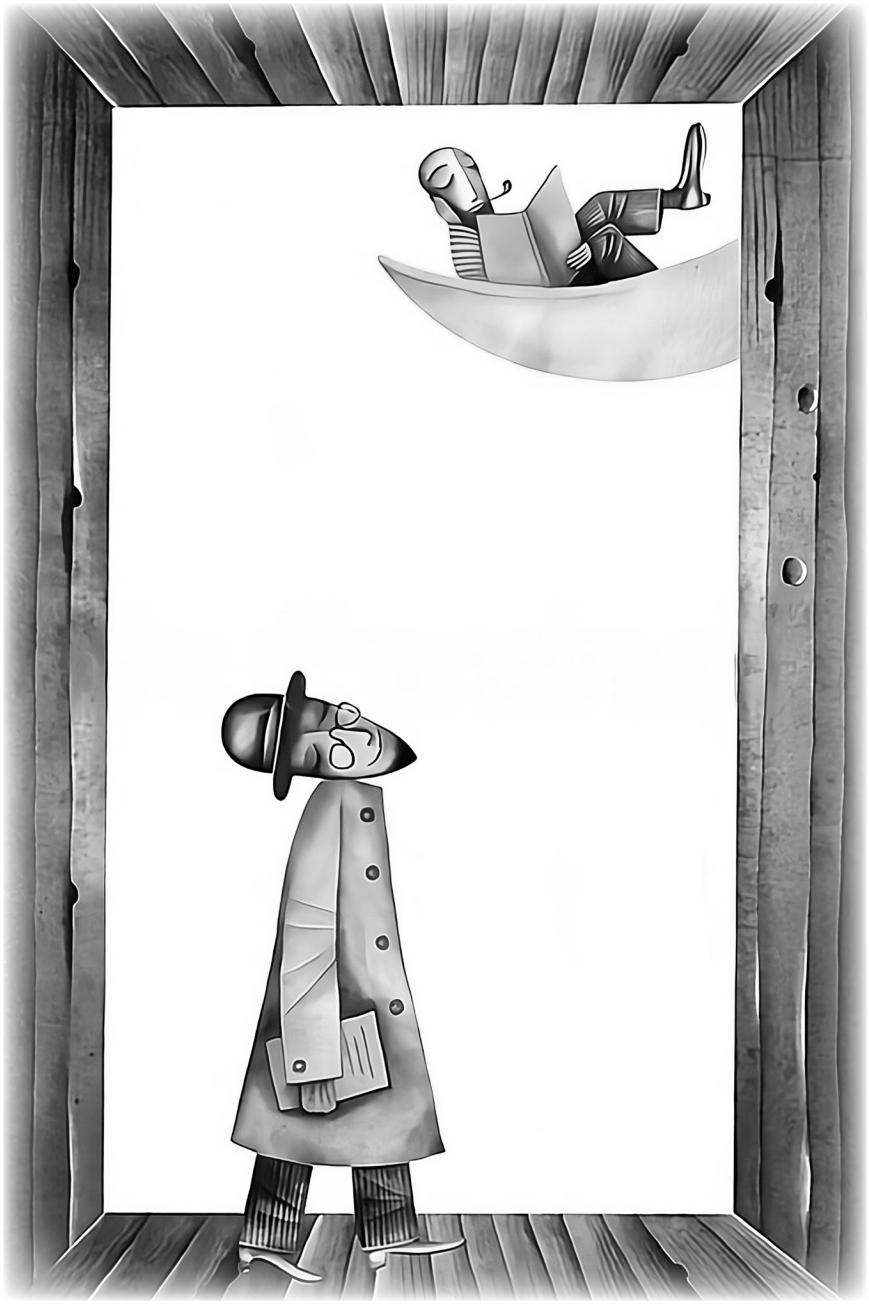
Sweet Venom

From the silver carafe of poisoned desire
does our tongue try to slake its naked thirst.



Desert Pastures...

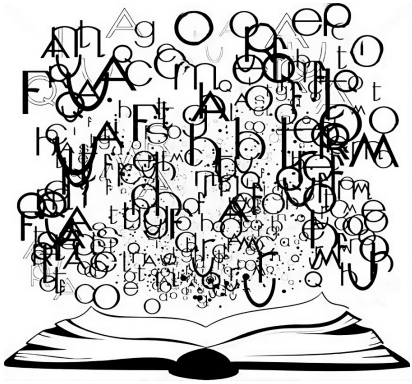
The pleasures of the heaven
are as pleasures of the earth,
Never suffice, they,
and mocking memories, their sly mirth.



Cosmoposium…

Let us leave the doors of Heaven open;
Welcome in it every Geometrician's Thought;
Fill its libraries with Symbols and such;
Raise Infinity from Naught and Aught…

"Can we living ever solve? After - is it then too late?", is a haunting 1922 illustration by American artist, Elihu Vedder (1836-1923), who was given to surrealism and symbolism. The drawing appeared in his collection, "Doubt, and Other Things".



Disenchantment…

Queer is the case of wisdom undiscerned
when knowledge is strewn around
as dozens to six pennies…

Scarecrow

It is in his name, and his name alone,
where the tyrant's power resides to strike fear,
for he is at heart a fearful coward
who would fall
without his armored scaffolding…

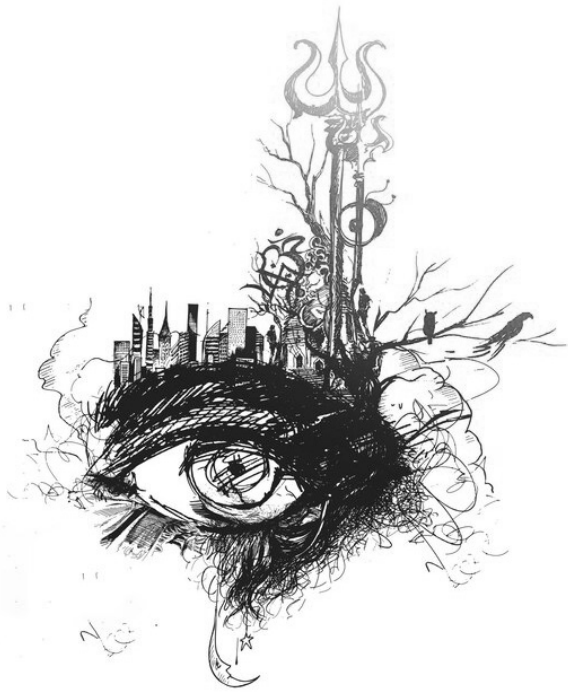
The painting is called “Rosa Celeste” by the famed artist, Gustav Dore (“Goostaav Dawray”, 1832-1883). This painting was used in Dante’s epic poem, “Divine Comedy”, in which Dante and his love, Beatrice, gaze upon the highest Heaven, The Empyrean.

Puzzled

Disordered are the lines of a Vision unperceived,
Smearing the form of the teasing denouement…

Pretender

Trust not the Scripture
which has survived the corridors of time,
for it is but a bastardized whisper
of the original baritone...



Crusades

A judge may resolve the disputes of commoners,
but only blood and steel pay homage
to disputes of Faith...

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An “illuminarc” is a melody in its own voice. A vision of closed eyes and contemplation. A zephyr of insubstantial sense. An echo without sound. A footfall without footsteps. It is, perhaps, mere fiction of malleable meaning for the non-believer. But for the rare Frostian seeker who chooses to take this path less traveled, the illuminarc is a soft strain of lilting call, as if from a siren of Odysseus. For her, the arc harkens a distant firefly within our subconscious, one which keeps its sublime flame alive against all of the chaos which confuses and batters the insides of our minds. …

And yet, it is clear that the path to the source of our inner light is not a singular act. It is not to be found by simple meditation and “peering inside” ourselves, stirring our thoughts and memories and guiding principles to divine “the truth” and “our true self”. The meandering labyrinth to our deepest core within must be traversed by un-spooling and unraveling the worldly experience we obtain without…

“We are all scrambled pieces of a puzzle,
with limited time to put the parts together.
To die having completed the picture,
that is the way of Buddha...”

Poetry

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